

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

Time — 8:00 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN, Morris McGregor (Virden): . . .
PROCEEDINGS NOT RECORDED

MR. MacMASTER: . . . directly affiliated with the legislation and 12 committees responsible for various parts of the Manitoba Building Code, each responsible for the Building Standards Board.

The criteria for safety inspection of equipment in buildings is contained in an National Code made up by committees that include representatives from each province, industry, manufacturers, users, etc. These codes are printed and distributed by the Canadian Standards Association, the Canadian Gas Association, Underwriters Laboratories of Canada, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, American National Standards Institute, National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessels Inspectors, National Research Council, and others.

Staffing — last year there was 54.31 staff years allocated to the branch. We are requesting 55.31 staff man years this year, an increase of one. The purpose of the additional staff man year is to provide courses and seminars throughout the province to groups of building inspectors and municipal officials, to give them expertise in the inspection of buildings constructed in their areas in conformance with the Manitoba Building Code.

MR. FOX: I'm going to ask, first of all to the Chairman, to suggest that those members who wish to pass, would pass out of this room so the Minister and those of us who are interested in the department, can do our work because if we're going to get that kind of interjection, it's just an annoyance and a nuisance and it certainly isn't conducive to getting the work done, of this department. I'm sure the Chairman would like to keep order and he doesn't need that kind of interruption and neither do I, and I'm certain the Minister doesn't either.

We are just starting. It's only 3 minutes after the hour and I'm certain that the members who haven't been here have no need to interject that way. So, Mr. Chairman, I would request of you to at least direct the Committee that we want to work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have absolutely as much right to sit in this Committee as the Member for Kildonan. If he wants me to leave, I will leave. I apologize to the Committee. It's not a parliamentary system and it's uncalled for, those kind of remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: I think my remarks, Mr. Chairman, were in order. We had just started and hadn't even got into this department; the Minister had made his opening remarks and my remarks were properly in order.

I have no objection to any other member participating in the debate of this department but I

certainly don't need a "pass" continually when they haven't even heard what the department is all about, and that's what occurred this evening.

Let me get started by saying that I appreciate the Minister's remarks and I would like to ask him, in view of the fact that he said we have a number of committees that are interprovincial, and so on, whether the reciprocity which we discussed previously in respect to the different ticket requirements in the refrigeration field, in the steam engineering field, also electrical and so on, if there is a complete reciprocity or are there still some anomalies?

MR. MacMASTER: There's still some trades, sadly enough, that aren't accepted across the country. If the Member for Kildonan will bear with me I'll produce a list that are accepted right across the country. I'll produce Manitoba's lists of people who, for some reason or other, aren't accepted. I'll get that list within the next five or ten minutes if the member wishes to carry on.

Just a comment in passing, taking sides with nobody on the actions of anybody at the Committee, I am not adverse to some humour being put into the Committee if it's taken as humour. I am considered by many to have lost my humour some place in the damn past, I don't know where it is and maybe I'm too bloody serious about an awful lot of things, but I don't mind a little bit of humour if it's taken in good light and if we can keep it at that tone, I'm quite satisfied with that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's nothing the Chairman would like to see more than to have the Estimates processed in the proper order as speedily as possible, with no reflection.

MR. MacMASTER: I'll get that list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Then let me get into some of the questions that I have. I would like to know from the Minister, I know that we have it on record how many tickets were issued in the various categories in his Labour Department report but what I would specifically like to know in the categories of the various refrigeration certificates, can the Minister indicate how many were not renewed and how many were new ones, because that would give us an idea of the kind of attrition that's taking place and whether we're standing still or whether we're progressing.

The other area I would like to ask the Minister, I understand there was a course at Red River for Fourths and Thirds and there was also, for a period of time, a course in respect to Seconds. When will that Second-class course be conducted again, or does the Minister feel we have sufficient certificates in the Second-class area?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, to give the Member for Kildonan the facts as I have them: In September of '80 there was 38 people enrolled in

Power Engineering courses in the Fourth Class that was completed in — I'll take my time with this because I know he is very interested in it. In Fourth Class, September '80 began, completed January '81, 38; commenced for Third Class, commenced January '81, 33; that's for the Third Class, there was 33 in a class; now, Second Class, the one that he's interested in and so am I very keenly, there were 17 commenced in the last, and I'm guessing, two to three weeks, but early in the month of February.

MR. FOX: Could the Minister indicate whether there are any plants at the present time operating under exemptions from having the proper qualified certificate?

MR. MacMASTER: Simplot is still operating with an exemption; Hooker was last year, the exemption has been lifted from Hooker Chemicals. Poetic, or whatever you wish to call it, Simplot received a very significant national safety award recently which has nothing to do, I know, but Simplot in fact is the one that is operating with an exemption now.

MR. FOX: Can the Minister indicate when he expects to lift the exemption on Simplot?

MR. MacMASTER: I'll try to answer several questions. I am a little tired of saying, I hope that Simplot will have a first-class person. I have asked the Department to get the number of engineers that are in place in that entire plant. I know it won't totally satisfy the Member for Kildonan. We have talked about this before, but I think for our own sakes we should look at the number of engineers that are in that plant, so that he, by conscience, may feel a little better about what's in that plant. I do not have a positive date when they will have a person in place, and as I say, I am as tired as he is of asking the question and me answering it; they still haven't. We said, and I'm guessing, a year ago that we hoped Hooker and Simplot would both have the exemption lifted. The exemption is now lifted from Hooker but it is not from Simplot.

In answer to the refrigeration class, in 1979, there was 118, and in 1980 there was 111, so there was a decrease of 7, which is the precise question the member asked, but in addition to that, going back two or three years, the numbers that are going through the course have decreased but there has been 30 in 1978, 10 in 1979, and there was 3 in 1980. In the last three years there has been 33 come on. If we are still, and I'm just guessing, trying to put these figures together, if we are still seven short, then I suppose in the last three years 40 must have gone out. I think that's the type of question that the member was asking and wanted the answers. The best figures that I can give him is there have been 40 go out and the last three years; there's been 33 come in with a reduction from last year of 7 in that category.

I think that's all the questions that he asked unless he can refresh my memory, there might be another one.

MR. FOX: I was asking in respect to second class, and what I omitted was to mention the first-class tickets, because some of the operators will be first class ticketed men as well. I understood the Minister

was going to provide me with a page of all the tickets so that we would know because attrition is taking place at third class level as well, and then of course some are moving up from third to second. If I could get a breakdown of the four different classes that would give me a picture of whether we are improving or decreasing and the number of qualified people that we have in the province.

In respect to Simplot, I know we have gone over this a number of times and I concur with the Minister that it gets repetitive and also gets annoying and boring, but nevertheless the question remains, that Hooker was able to get itself away from the exemption and I think that possibly Simplot even though they should be commended for having a safety record, nevertheless are operating with what we call an unqualified certificate and I think as long as the exemption is going to be there Simplot is not going to make a real effort to hire the qualified personnel.

And so I would suggest to the Minister that you know, you look at this situation and they have been brought into court and fined for not operating with a qualified personnel. I think maybe he may have to get tough with them again and then they'll enforce the letter of the law as they should.

They are working at an advantage which other plants in that area don't have and it just means that they can operate at lesser cost in that one particular instance. So it should be looked at and the Minister should get a little more severe with them. Now he may not appreciate what I'm suggesting, but I do believe that that would be one avenue that he could take.

I'd further like to discuss with the Minister whether, and I touched on it during the Workplace Safety Health Act section of his department's estimates, whether there is any effort being made to determine safe procedures in respect to a flooded ammonia systems. I indicated last year that many of the firms were going in for that kind of a system. It operates more efficiently, but I also believe it's a little greater hazard because of the fact that you have liquid ammonia in the whole system instead of just gases in part of it and liquid up to the evaporators; and whether his department is doing anything to suggest procedures in respect to safety and whether there has been any directives to safety committees or to plant superintendents in respect to having some kind of safety equipment for those areas that have large flooded plants.

I know that we had an instance, and I mentioned that last year, where a company had a break in their line and they had to wait three hours before a wetsuit could be found for someone to get into that particular area. Now I think that any large plant that has this kind of a system should either have one of its own or, in liaison with the Fire Department next door, wherever they happen to be, that the Fire Department should have it.

Now the Fire Department was one that produced the wetsuit the last time around but I'm not aware that there are very many outfits that have their own, or that the Fire Department has made a greater effort to have this kind of equipment. I'm just wondering whether the mechanical division is looking at this problem and seeing how it can be rectified.

MR. MacMASTER: Well, Mr. Chairman, last year we discussed this particular point. I've had our M and E

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

people constantly checking. They don't feel, and here I guess we differ, but the advice they give me is that they do not feel there is a need for an established new system; they have not in fact located any problems; they have been instructed and if in fact they do, that they report directly up to the deputy who, in turn, can involve the Workplace Safety Department in reviewing the incidents or the problems in trying to establish a new procedure, maybe once and for all to try and put this to rest because the Member for Kildonan, I assure you, Mr. Chairman, raised it last year.

I assure you our people have looked at it during the course of the preceding months. We have not found fault with what has taken place. Consequently we haven't implemented new systems or a new procedure, as the Member for Kildonan I have to suspect very conscientiously thinks there should be a new procedure in place.

I think maybe at this point what we should do is have the Member for Kildonan, if he would be kind enough to document to me some of the problems that he feels precisely exist and I assure him I'll have my M and E people look at it and we'll correspond directly with him if he wishes, I am prepared to set up a meeting and let him sit down with some of my people. It's maybe past the point of questioning each other and both of us having a sincere feeling for it, and we're not getting anywhere.

I again reiterate, it was raised last year, we've looked at it, my people advise me there's nothing really wrong with that system. If the member has some specifics, if he'd like to have a meeting with some of my staff, I am very very willing to do that.

On the numbers that he requested of the power engineers, first-class licences issued for 1980 was 178 — I'll wait until he gets his . . .

MR. FOX: That's okay, I'll pick it up in Hansard.

MR. MacMASTER: Okay. First-class, 178; second-class, 394; third-class, 588; fourth-class, 946; fifth-class, 1,648. I gave him the numbers in the refrigeration class in 1980, is 111.

MR. FOX: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I agree that it's a safe system but there are always accidents. I know that in any working area people will bump into things and snap off a pipe here and there and this is what occurred in the Swift Plant. Now as I indicated, this system, why it creates a greater hazard than the previous system that has been in use, is because there's a lot more liquid spills out immediately into the break area and it is difficult to get into the area to shut off the valves; and also there should be in my opinion, shut-off valves immediately outside of a room, because in most areas where refrigeration is used, they are generally sealed quite well and insulated, and there's very little air circulation takes place. What happened in the Swift Plant was that it took them three hours before they could get in. They had to have special equipment and a special self-supporting life system to go in.

I am suggesting that there should be some identifying of these kinds of issues that may occur again, and that there should be a laid-down procedure to the safety committees of the particular plants that have such large volumes of ammonia.

Now, if the department is prepared to wait until we have another accident to find out how we have to

suffer and struggle through another particular accident, that's fine, but I cannot see why they cannot at least have a hard look at it and make some recommendations which could be followed in the case of emergency procedures.

Again I mentioned that because of the density of what takes place where liquid ammonia is sprayed into the system, into the particular area when a break occurs, you need special equipment and most of the plants that I am aware of do not have any of this. So possibly, as I say, if the mechanical department wishes to wait until they have another incident and then make decisions, what I'm saying it's well worth having a look at. It wouldn't take very much to determine what could and should be done.

Now I know that in respect to developing these systems and installing them, there is ample inspection. But there isn't always ample planning done in order to make sure that there is more than one way of getting at the system and isolating a particular area. That's what was found in the Swift plant when they had a breakdown there.

Now I'm sure the Minister wouldn't want to wait until we have another accident, wherever it happens to be, and find out that because we just did nothing about it, it would take us a long time and a real struggle to eliminate that particular problem.

I believe if we are going to enforce The Workplace Safety and Health Act in what its intent is, then this mechanical department has to come up with advice to him, and if they say everything is fine and dandy, then I say they're sitting in ivory towers. I don't think that everything is fine and dandy. I work on the floor and I know that there are areas where if something broke, we wouldn't be able to get in. I know that at the place where I work they have no special equipment with which to get in and unless the Fire Department comes up with some equipment to let us into that area, and they have to be informed if they're wearing it, where to find a valve, what to do with it, then they're going to have difficulties. So I think a little bit of forethought and a little bit of suggested planning in respect to this kind of an area would be helpful from the department.

Now I do not desire to debate it tonight. I'll talk to the Minister privately and I'll give him further information if he wishes, but I'm saying that I do think his department should be looking at it a little more closely. It is not just rosey out there in the plant areas.

I know the inspectors come around and do a diligent job, but they do not have to live with the particular area for 24 hours a day, like the people on the shift. If something happens, as I say, certainly we've got gas masks and so on. We've also got totally self-sustaining oxygen masks. But if you can't get near it because you're going to get burned because the place is spraying liquid all over the place, and you don't have a wet suit, you're not going to be of much use no matter how much you know and no matter how much you want to do something. So I suggest that this is an area that should be looked at.

Let me switch to something else. The Minister indicated that there was an upgrading in respect to the flexible gas connectors after we had that situation that we discovered a couple of years back and he gave us an update last year in regard to that.

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

Can he inform us, the Committee, whether we are now anywhere near having caught up with the backlog that there was?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: Well, two or three answers, I'll talk to the member about this availability of proper equipment that he was mentioning. I'll talk to him after about that and see if we can't follow up specifically on that.

In answer to one of his previous questions, Power Engineers, they are accepted, our credentials, right across Canada except for Ontario and Quebec. The journeyman electricians, their licences are interchangeable with Alberta, Saskatchewan and ourselves.

In relationship to the gas connector problem that we chose to do something about and was long overdue in doing something about, our numbers are, that there's been approximately 21,000 connectors that were changed in the Winnipeg area. We are aware, positively, of 42 that, in our opinion, were potentially faulty connectors which could have been considered potentially lethal.

We suspect, Mr. Chairman, that that number of 42 could possibly be tripled if we had our hands on all that were changed, but we have positive evidence of 42 that were waiting to explode, I suppose you could say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for his information. Let me ask him in respect to firefighting, which comes under this department as well. Can he inform us whether there's been any thought in the mechanical division to suggest that there be some retrofitting of some of the highrises that may not have standard equipment that is current at the present time, in respect to the standards? Because there are some highrises that weren't required to implement all that safety equipment that there is present in the bylaws today.

MR. MacMASTER: Just a clarification to the member. Are we talking about the Fire Commissioner's Department or is the question specifically related to M and E? We're prepared to discuss all the fire prevention methods.

MR. FOX: I can leave the fire thing to when we get to the Fire Department.

MR. MacMASTER: It's next on the agenda.

MR. FOX: Yes, I understand that.

MR. MacMASTER: Okay, thank you.

MR. FOX: I lost my place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(1) — the Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. The Minister indicated that to his knowledge, 21,000 faulty or 21,000 flexible connectors had been replaced in the Winnipeg area. We know from discussions last year that there were 1,000 or several

thousand that were replaced outside of the Winnipeg area.

My question to the Minister would be, what percentage of the total number that needs to be replaced as this 21,000 or perhaps even 23,000 figure, represent?

MR. MacMASTER: Our information is that virtually all the connectors have been changed. I have to put it in the record, that I'm sure there's some someplace, somewhere that we can't find, but we're reasonably satisfied. My department's advised me, the other organizations that were working in conjunction with this have advised us, that they really think by and large that the problem has been corrected.

MR. COWAN: If I understand the Minister correctly, then it is the understanding of the department and of course the caveat that he placed upon his remarks, is it absolutely necessary that there may be isolated instances where connectors have not been replaced that they are not aware of, however, it is their general understanding that overall, this problem has been dealt with and all those major areas of replacement have been accomplished. Is that correct?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, right.

MR. COWAN: Thank you. The Minister last year when we talked about the exemptions for Hooker and Simplot, indicated that it was his opinion that the power engineers were becoming a pretty scarce commodity — those are his words — in this province and that it was an area that was being looked at in respect to critical trades, critical skills, trades, designation. Yet if we look at the figures this year for the number of certificates issued under The Power Engineers' Act, we find that in fact there is an actual decrease in the number of certificates issued, that's including the renewals from the year previous, 1979, being a total of 3,939, and this year being a total 3,917. I would ask the Minister for some comment on what appears to be a decrease in that already scarce commodity in the province, as the Minister referred to it last year, that of the power engineer.

MR. MacMASTER: I can't definitely explain why in one category they're up or the other category they're down, and I have passed the document on to one of the staff. I do recall that in some categories they were up and some categories they were down, there is nothing unusual or nothing hidden about that. That is an up-and-down sort of a situation where there's more people going in, more people coming out, and, yes, top notch power engineers are a scarce commodity in Canada, not just necessarily Manitoba. Yes, they are as scarce as hen's teeth, if that's the expression I used last year, then I say that again this year; they are very very much in demand, and people are quite prepared to pay one heck of a premium to try and get top notch people. I am aware that during the course of the year Simplot did in fact have, I'm guessing, it's one or two on their way, and it didn't materialize in either case because they did inform us at one particular time during the course of the year, they had a second-class coming and it didn't materialize.

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

MR. COWAN: Perhaps we're in the wrong profession, if power engineers are that scarce — (Interjection)— The Minister says it is a long grind to get the ticket and he is certainly correct, they deserve the money they're getting as do all most all workers deserve the money they're getting. However, the fact is that there is still in this province and across the country, as the Minister is correct in saying, a decrease in the number of qualified power engineers and it's a crucial area for the province. It's a crucial area for the country. It's just one of those areas in the development of skilled trades, in fact critical skilled trades, where much more action is needed.

I would ask the Minister if he can inform us as to what action his department has taken over the past year to try to deal with this skilled trade shortage, and action or actions which he suggested would be forthcoming when he recognized the fact that they were scarce, and what actions they have in mind for the upcoming year to encourage people to move into this trade and to encourage the full use of power engineers where ever they are mandated legislatively in the province?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, we have been working very hard with industry and the people involved in it. We have substantial numbers in the third and fourth class. We're hoping to encourage some of the people to carry on through the years and further develop into the higher classifications. In working with the industry and with the engineers we have revised some of the courses, which was felt desirable by both industry and by the trades people themselves within that trade. I should say that Simplot itself does have a first-class chief. They have a staff of power engineers, not necessarily the second-class, that's the difficulty there, but they do have a first-class. They have several lower classes. They are now very actively training engineers right in plant. They have sent more than one to Red River Community College for additional training. They constantly have a staff of between 12 and 14 professional engineers within their operation, and they have a record of pretty good maintenance within their operation, plus the fact that they did get an excellent safety award and they have an excellent safety record.

There are some efforts being made, which we have been very insistent of, of Simplot in that particular plant, and some pretty legitimate efforts are being made and our department has been working with the industry, both labour and management, revising the courses somewhat to the satisfaction of all parties.

MR. COWAN: Just to comment on the Minister's remarks when he says that there a substantial number coming in at a third, fourth, and fifth-class levels, and that's where we would expect to see increases if in fact there was a concentrated effort to bring people in, because you don't bring them in at the first and second class levels, you bring them in and have them work their way through those lower class levels.

However, while the Minister is absolutely correct in suggesting that there's a substantial increase in the fifth-class level, we know that there is going to be some of those persons who will drop out, and I imagine the Minister can probably provide us with a

statistically acceptable percentage as a number of people who enter at fifth-class who do not make it to fourth-class and do not make it ultimately to first-class. We will see a number of those drop out and we would expect to see an increase there.

However, if you take the third, fourth and fifth classes, you see that in 1979 there were 40 — excuse me — in the third class, there were 13 more in 1980 over 1979; in the fourth class there were 41 less in 1980 over 1979; in the fifth class there were 35 more in 1980 over 1979. That's some quick math. I hope I'm not proven incorrect at a later time, but I think that the figures are roughly correct which would give us a difference of 7 additions in those three classes over the past year, which is not a significant number in respect to the need. It's a significant number for those individuals, but it's not a significant number in respect to the critical shortage in that area, and therefore using the classifications that the Minister gave us, third, fourth, and fifth-class, we have to disagree with his statement that there is a substantial increase.

He says that they have revised the courses somewhat. The government has done that. Has that been done in conjunction with advice and recommendations from the Power Engineering Advisory Committee?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, there's a Power Engineering Advisory Committee at the Red River Community College and it was done in conjunction with them. In fact we can pick up, 30, 40, 50, or 60 people in the power engineering trade every year, with the multitudes of opportunities in trades in this province, that's not bad. If we could multiply that to every trade existing in the Province of Manitoba we would have one heck of a big increase in people taking trades.

There are other ways you can reach your power engineers' plateau. You can work as a person within a plant and eventually gain so much practical experience and eventually you pick up a lot of the bookwork yourself, that periodically people do in fact write courses, and they are permitted to do that.

MR. COWAN: Even that 35, which is an increase, is in percentage terms not very great an increase. I don't have my calculator here, so I can't figure it out on the spot, but it would appear to be far less than a couple or around a couple of percent increase, and we're talking about an area where the Minister has found it necessary to provide at least one exemption presently, and in the past to provide a couple of exemptions because there just weren't enough first-class operators and second-class operators available, and yet we see that sort of miniscule increase in the number of certificates issued which includes renewals by the way, in those areas.

I would just suggest that the Minister is absolutely correct in his assumption or in his thesis that there are not enough power engineers. I would suggest that more has to be done if we are in fact to deal with this problem in any sort of a comprehensive way. There's just not enough coming onstream even with all their efforts.

Last year the Minister indicated that the Power Engineering Advisory Committee would be — maybe — I have to change that — his words were maybe recommending changes in regulations. Did those

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

recommendations come forward from the Power Engineering Advisory Committee for such changes in the existing regulations

MR. MacMASTER: Yes the recommendations have come forward. They are going through our review committees right now. They're going through the A.G.'s department, they're going through my department and hopefully they'll be in place in the very near future. This committee has worked extremely hard in the last year. It's been very, very difficult and I think they've done a heck of a job.

MR. COWAN: We only hope those regulations do in fact become entrenched in legislation or through the regulatory process through the Order-in-Council as soon as is possible.

The Minister indicated also that there were last year, and I didn't pick up his figures this year because unfortunately I had to be out of the room for a minute, but last year I believe that there were nine separate boards or committees directly affiliated with this section and 12 committees responsible for various parts in Manitoba Building Code, each responsible for the Building Standards Board.

The question to the Minister is: Are all those committees and boards currently functioning?

MR. MacMASTER: Of the 19 that were mentioned, 17 are active, 2 are not active. It's felt that their work is virtually redundant and that's the Gas Examination Board and the Oil Examination Board. They've virtually served their purpose according to the information I've been given and the work is now automatically flowing through the department.

All the other boards and committees are all active.

MR. COWAN: Would this department be responsible for examining leaks in propane or gas originating from commercial facilities?

MR. MacMASTER: Well, we could be involved, Mr. Chairman, but in a large number of cases, it's the utility that does that kind of thing. If the member could be more specific, maybe I could answer his questions.

MR. COWAN: I am referring specifically to a leak, which was in the media just a number of days ago, earlier in last week. Unfortunately, I was not able to get the media reports, or all the media reports, I was up north at the time. However, I do know that there was some suggestion that leak had been purposely caused and that it was a substantial leak and that there were investigations that were ongoing in respect to that leak.

I'm talking about the leak at one of the Greater Winnipeg Gas facilities. I'd ask the Minister if his department has investigated that leak?

MR. MacMASTER: That is not our responsibility, Mr. Chairman, to investigate that. Winnipeg Gas is responsible for it. They fixed it and it comes under the authority of the Utilities Board. It's not our responsibility, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Did this department or any other department under the Minister's responsibility, investigate it, that leak?

MR. MacMASTER: No investigation to my knowledge has taken place and should not have if it did.

MR. COWAN: So the Minister is suggesting that his department would not become involved in investigating that. The reason I ask is that there was media conjecture and I have to admit that I did not hear all of it, because I was out of the city; however, it's my understanding that the leak came about on a piece of equipment that had been altered and that alteration was under its first test, its first winter test, and that it's perfectly understandable for leaks to come about in that situation. However, I have very little information more than that to provide, but I would think that it would be an area where the Minister, or at least the Public Utilities Board, if that is appropriate authority, would be most interested.

If the piece that did leak had been altered, would it be the department's responsibility to make certain that alteration was in keeping with standards. Again that may be the Public Utilities Board, but I'm just trying to make certain of where to bring this matter up.

MR. MacMASTER: It should be brought up with the Public Utilities Board, they are responsible for that jurisdiction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD S. EVANS: A couple of brief questions regarding inspection at Simplot Chemical in Brandon and I believe with regard to the inspection of mechanical and engineering matters.

A couple of years ago the predecessor of the present Minister of Labour indicated that there was some curtailment of the degree of inspection services provided by the staff in Brandon, because that Minister did not wish to harass the company. I got the impression at that time, I'm going by memory, Mr. Chairman, that there was some curtailment of what I consider to be the legal and rightful duty and responsibility of staff of this department with respect to mechanical and engineering standards.

And my question is: Is it correct that the inspection staff still have to get permission from the company before they go ahead and inspect those boilers?

MR. MacMASTER: I think we should set the record straight and the record is this, that the inspection staff never did have to get inspection permission to go into that particular plant. I remember the incident with my predecessor and maybe she was being accused by others of harassing the company, or maybe that allegation was being made, but let me assure the member, and I should also say that that particular point I think the previous Minister of Labour might not have been familiar with all the positions and the actors that were involved in the situation; but I'd like to assure the Member for Brandon, as kindly as I can, that I am maybe a little more familiar with the operations and I am not intimidated in any way by any of the parties involved in that particular situation.

We are inspecting and we will inspect where we choose to inspect in the Province of Manitoba and we are not intimidated in any way, shape or form

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

and do not ask for special permission from any particular party to investigate what we feel is a situation that needs investigating.

MR. EVANS: I am very glad to hear the Minister make this firm statement because that attitude by the Minister is a responsible attitude and that is the attitude that any Minister of Labour of any government must take, but, Mr. Chairman, before the Member for La Verendrye gets too carried away, the word harrassment and the use of the word harrass, was not the words of the members of the Opposition, including myself. We did not . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: One Speaker at a time.

MR. EVANS: We did not suggest that there was harrassment, I believe, and I am prepared to check Hansard. I believe that was the word, the expression, the phrase used by the former Minister of Labour, the now Minister of Cultural Affairs, that she was going to insure that company, Simplot, was not to be harrassed by inspectors in her Department. (Interjection)— The Member for Rock Lake indicates we are dealing with 81, and that's fine, but the point is I want to make sure, I want to satisfy myself, that 1979 or 1978, is not present with those, those situations, that policy, that procedure is not present in the department in the year of our Lord 1981.

May I ask the Minister this question, Mr. Chairman? While he has stated they do not have to get permission, is it the practise of these inspectors to give prior notice to company officials that the inspectors are on their way to do whatever they have to do?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I have answered this question several times and I think I should sort of add to the first question; if the Member for Brandon or any other member of the Legislature of Manitoba finds that a union or an organization or a Crown corporation or a company is crying they are being harrassed, as long as I am Minister of Labour you can rest assured that if it's deemed to be harrassment it's for damn good cause. I just want to make that clear, I don't care whether it's a company in the future, to put that thing to bed.

Mr. Chairman, I have said repeatedly, and I repeat, that it wouldn't be wise, and I can't say it any stronger without being too crude or rude, but it wouldn't be wise for me to find out that our inspectors are informing companies of periodic checks that they may be making. The only time our inspectors may — through procedure a company would know when they are returning as if there was a 48-hour limit to have something corrected or a 24-hour limit, and obviously the company and the union and the people involved would be expecting our inspector to return. We do not prewarn people as to when we are coming to visit them for whatever reason. It's not good policy; it's not a good philosophy; and it's certainly not a philosophy of mine, and it will not be accepted, will not be condoned by people within the Departments that I am responsible for.

MR. EVANS: Again, I welcome the Minister's remarks, because the reason I asked the question, of course, Mr. Chairman, is because the former Minister

of Labour did indicate also that she thought as a matter of courtesy, or words to that effect, that her Department — she was going to insure that the Department would give proper notice to the companies before the inspectors came.

I don't want to put words in that person's mouth, but I recall her words generally to that extent, and now I see . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rock Lake on a point of order.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I would like to know if we're dealing with 1981 Estimates or are we dealing with 1979? I think we are dealing with mechanical engineering problems that may be occurring today and not 1979.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Probably, the Member for Rock Lake has a point. The Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: On the same point of order, Mr. Chairman. I think what we are trying to do is establish whether there is a definite policy in respect to the department, and I think the Minister has very well indicated that there is a policy that there will be no coddling of anybody in respect to this particular area of inspection. I am sure the Member for Brandon East was just trying to determine that particular policy and get assurances from the Minister.

To set the record straight, I wanted to also indicate — I am no longer on the point of order, but I will take the advantage of having the mike — there is notice given by the department because there is an annual inspection that takes place and that comes onstream; people have to prepare for it. I know because I am involved in it. When we have to have a boiler inspected we have to indicate, we give notice that we are going to take a particular piece of equipment out of the line. You can't just come in any time and say, let me have a look at it. A boiler is under pressure; it takes 24 hours to cool off sometimes. There are many other incidences of where there has to be co-operation and it's a two-way street. I think the only thing that we were trying to determine was whether there would be spot inspections, and whether there would be any kind of notice on that, and I think that's the area the Minister gave us assurance that there wouldn't be, and I am satisfied with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rock Lake.

MR. EINARSON: The point of order that I raised, Mr. Chairman, I listened very carefully to the honourable gentleman opposite, and I thought the Member for Brandon East had a valid question, and I heard the Minister give a very adequate answer to him, but he still wants to continue pursuing 1979 Estimates and dragging out the Hansards from 1979. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order, and I think we'd get on with the business of dealing with the resolution in 1981.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's exactly what the Chairman would like too. The Member for Churchill on the same point of order.

MR. COWAN: I don't wish to belabour the discussion. I don't think that it was all that necessary

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

in the first place. I can be fairly certain that we would have been completed with this particular questioning had the point of order not been interjected. However, it's the responsibility and the right of every member to bring a point of order forward when they believe they have a legitimate point of order, and it's the responsibility, and I don't mean to lecture the Chair on this, of the Chairperson to rule on that point of order, and when you suggested that you felt that the Member for Rock Lake —(Interjection)— I am speaking to the point of order, if you will listen you will understand, perhaps. The fact is that when the Chair said that he felt that the individual or the Member for Rock Lake had a point of order; what he in fact was saying was that we cannot bring up in our discussions in these Estimates what happened in the past, and I would suggest to you that we have to be able to bring up in the discussion of the Estimates what happened in the past, and I would hope that you would not rule that is not part of the Estimates procedure. It has been; we have allowed it throughout and we have found that this committee has done, what I believe to be, a very productive examination of the Estimates, being able to look to the past, being able to look to what is happening right now, and yes indeed, even being able to look to the future.

I would hope that we would not be denied that opportunity because of a ruling, and I would ask you to make a ruling on whether or not in fact, the Member for Rock Lake had a point of order when he said that we should not be able to discuss what happened in 1978 or 1979, when reviewing in fact what is happening in 1980. I think it's a very important decision on your part.

I know that the Member for Rock Lake wants to see these move along as expediently as possible and so do we and so do the Minister and I know you do, Mr. Chairperson, but I think that we have to be able to look at what is happening today from many perspectives and in a global sense. I would hope that you would not rule that we cannot discuss what happened in the past, and I know that had we had the opportunity to continue on with discussing this matter we probably would have been able to have finished it by now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rock Lake.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, having just listened to the Member for Churchill, apparently he did not listen to what I said. I said that the Member for Brandon East had a valid question to ask the Minister and he went back to 1979 Estimates of a previous Minister. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, and I listened to him, and I think we gave him, in all fairness, the opportunity to pose his question, to seek information; that's the purpose of the Estimates. I think that the Minister gave a very adequate answer to it, but the Member for Brandon East did not seem to be satisfied with that, Mr. Chairman, and he is still belabouring the point. I thought the Minister had given him a full answer to his question, and I thought that we should get on with the Estimates that are before us. I have no quarrel with my honourable friend opposite to question the Minister and seek information; never have I ever said that they should not be allowed to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Now I don't understand a point of order. Is a point of order that we cannot discuss events that transpired in the past or is a point of order that we must be satisfied with the Minister's answer upon first examination?

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, I thought I made it clear. The point of order I raised, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Brandon East has posed a legitimate question, he got an answer from the Minister, but on my point of order, Mr. Chairman, I don't think we have to go back and belabour it again. I think the Minister has given adequate answer and we should get on with the Estimates that are before us, but the Member for Brandon East wants to go back again and belabour the matter. I thought he got an answer from the Minister and that's my point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well we got more points of order than I am a Chairman and I think the point was well taken and I think the Chair would feel that you have to compare one year to another, but how far we go back is maybe in question at this moment, so could we go ahead with the question started. I know there's three or four on the same point of order. If we want to hassle all night I would like another Chairman. I could go and do something else, but really the point is clearing these Estimates and the Member for Brandon East did have the Chair, even though the Member for Logan is on the same point of order. All right, the Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Chairman, I want to draw your attention to this set of documents that we are looking at here, the Minister's report. We're dealing with the year 1979 and 1980. I can see gas inspections here of equipment, November 1st, 1979 to October 31st, 1980.

I sat in that Chair where you're sitting, Mr. Chairman, for a good number of years and I have never ever seen it that a person couldn't go back to something else, because I have seen it year after year where they've gone back 20 years talking about something. That's the only way that you can compare what is happening in a department from year to year over a three-year period or five-year period or ten-year period.

I think that the questions that the Member for Brandon East were asking were to the point. I think that we've been getting along fairly well in this Committee. We've been proceeding, but if you want to knock them down, drag them out and fight in this Committee, well damnit all, you'll sure as hell get it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not the Chair's point. The Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is quite willing, God willing, able to answer any further questions that you might have on this point, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then we'll go back to the Member for Brandon East.

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I think we were getting along very fine. I don't know why the Member for Rock Lake is so defensive.

My questions pertain to the policy in the year of our Lord 1981 and the reason I'm asking these questions is, that the previous Minister, as I indicated before, had given the impression to myself and other members of the Opposition that certain procedural changes were ordered by herself, with respect to the Simplot Chemical Company, now our fertilizer company.

Now, the Minister answered one question and that is with regard to having to get permission and the answer was quite clear that he was going to carry out his responsibilities under the Act as he is required to.

I asked the second question today. In the year of our Lord 1981, are you requiring the staff to give notice? And I think more or less we got the answer to that.

So now I want to go back and ask a third question, because the former Minister told us, and this was on Tuesday, June 13th, 1978, and I'm quoting, it says, "Mrs. Price", on page 3,684 of Hansard of that year. They are referring to the inspectors. "They are not going around at the turn of the shifts now, because they had been told not to". My question to the Minister is, has he told his inspectors that they should not go around at the turn of the shifts because he, or in his wisdom, deems that they should not go around at the turn of shifts?

MR. MacMASTER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think with some consultation with myself and the directors of my division, is that they are allowed the latitude to exercise appropriate inspection procedures and times and I have a great deal of faith in them, that they'll do their inspections appropriately. They will do them without giving notice to employers precisely when they're making spot checks. I've made it very clear that if they do, then somebody has a problem and it's not me.

I have again, a great deal of faith in the common sense exercised by our inspectors. I haven't ordered them precisely when to make inspections. I have no intention of doing that. I think that they're quite capable of making a rational judgment when they should make inspections in plants.

MR. EVANS: The Minister has indicated that he's not advising his staff or telling them when they should make inspections, that they should use their own good common sense, fine. But just to make it clear then, there is no specific suggestion or recommendation that either at Simplot or indeed any other plant in the province, that there is no policy which says you should not go at the turn of the shifts. Do I take that as the Minister's answer? I just want to get that clear.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I am satisfied that our inspectors inspect at what they deem to be the appropriate time to satisfy themselves, to satisfy the director, and to satisfy the Minister and to satisfy the conscience of the people in the Province of Manitoba that a good job is being done.

MR. EVANS: The Minister may not have this detail at his fingertips, but he could perhaps give us an

indication. How often would inspection staff go in this area of mechanical and engineering to a plant such as Simplot? At least once a year I would gather that's the minimum, but is there any pattern, two, three, four times a year or is there any reason why they should go less often or more often? Just what is the approach taken by the inspection staff with regard to the number and the length of the visits of inspections?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, we suspect that in a plant such as Simplot, our inspectors would be in there approximately five or six times a year. The inspections could range from two hours to half a day.

MR. EVANS: Is that level of inspection above normal for a plant of that size or is that par for the course?

MR. MacMASTER: I don't know which course the gentleman is golfing on but I suspect that it is par for the course.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, then can we be satisfied that the inspection procedures and the extent and degree of inspection that is carried out at Simplot Chemicals in Brandon, is carried out in keeping with the general policy that's in place for the entire province, that there's no special policy for Simplot? I believe the Minister is telling us that this is part of a general thrust, the general approach in this area of activity by his department.

MR. MacMASTER: The member is correct. It's a general policy; it's quite in order as far as we're concerned and we feel it's very adequate.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, there was some indication of reduction of output by the Hooker Chemical Company. To what degree are inspections taking place in that area? Because of reduced activity there, does that mean that the number of inspections are reduced? I wouldn't think so, but I'm asking anyway.

MR. MacMASTER: Possibly in the Hooker situation it would be three times a year, generally speaking the same length of period of time, couple of hours, three hours.

MR. EVANS: In another area then, this all happens to be incidentally, Mr. Chairman, in the East End of Brandon in the Industrial Park; both of these companies that we've been discussing are in the Brandon City Industrial Park; the third operation is also and it's connected to one of the former, and that is the Paul's Hauling maintains a yard there and the trucks come there for products, etc. As the Minister probably knows or maybe has some knowledge of, there was a very bad accident a couple of years ago with injuries and death; injuries on the part of the fire fighters and death I believe, eventually on the part of the driver. Is this area of mechanical and engineering inspection applied to what looks to me to be large boiler-like containers that Paul's Hauling, and indeed other trucking companies, might carry anhydrous ammonia about the province. As I think many on this committee

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

know, particularly those with an agricultural background, it can be a very dangerous substance. There was a leak; there was an accident there a couple of years ago; and as I said one person died and there were injuries and I'm just wondering, is this the area of the department that insures that these trucks and their connections, etc., are up to standard, that all safety procedures that should be carried out are being carried out? Is this a function of this division?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, we make the annual inspection to certify the boilers. The rest of the particular operation is a Federal jurisdiction.

MR. EVANS: It's a Federal jurisdiction. What about with respect to the licensing of the trucks? I would imagine that's in the Department of Highways but it seems to me that that's a provincial licensing matter, but I guess what the Minister is telling us with regard to safety standards, then for whatever reason this is Federal, even though they operate under a provincial traffic licence.

MR. MacMASTER: I can only repeat that we make the annual inspection for certification of the boilers and it's a Federal Charter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: There's one that appears to be an anomaly in the Annual Report of this year and I direct the Minister's attention to Table 6, which indicates the number of inspections of the electrical installations under The Electrician's Licence Act and last year there were 64 electrical installations in buildings; no tests of hospital operating room floors; and 19 fire and explosion investigations; this year we only have four fire and explosion investigations for a total of four inspections altogether, compared to a total of 83 inspections last year. I'd ask the Minister if that is an explainable phenomena.

MR. MacMASTER: Table 6, Mr. Chairman, is only done at the request of the Fire Commissioner's Office.

MR. COWAN: So in fact, there have only been those numbers of request from the Fire Commissioner's Office. Is there a reason for the low number of requests? Has that happened in the past or is this a unique phenomena for the year 1980?

MR. MacMASTER: With a difference between four and 19, I think was last years, it is strictly up to the Fire Commissioner's Office the request that they make of the M & E division.

MR. COWAN: Then I would ask the Minister if the first line in that Table which reads: Electrical Installations in buildings, where last year it indicated there were 64 and this year it indicates there were none, is also made upon the request of the Fire Commissioner's Office, or is that action initiated by the Department?

MR. MacMASTER: The staff informed me that the electrical installations in buildings under Table 6 relates to some times and the only example they could give was a fishing camp where there may be a

diesel plant in place. The director tells me that quite obviously this year we just didn't inspect any of them or were made aware of them or requested to look at them, in this particular year.

MR. COWAN: This is a particular inspection that is usually made upon request or upon receipt of information of a new installation going in, that would indicate that they want those sort of installations? I ask that question because we can go back quite some time if we want, back to 1966 when there were 1,504 inspections under this particular item or another year 1969 when there were 1,738. We see in the last number of years that the number has been dropping fairly rapidly so I was just trying to determine in my own mind using that historical information which is available to us and which we have to consider from time to time, what the long-term trend was and it appears as if it's a perfectly explainable phenomena and I thank the Minister for providing us with that information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2. (b)(1) — pass — the Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Mr. Chairman, I noticed in the number of inspections in respect to boilers, unfired pressure vessels there was a note that the refrigeration inspections were included in the vessels total, and I just wondered why that was separated out; and secondly, is it because there is getting less pressure vessels in respect to refrigeration or why is there a separation, not a separation as indicated in the original print-out?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Member for Kildonan repeat the question, please?

MR. FOX: Yes, on page 16, Number of inspections made and certificates issued under The Steam and Pressure Plants Act, there's a number of headings under that and there's one that says, Refrigeration. All the way across it's blank yet there's a memo that says there were 260 inspections of anhydrous ammonia portable vessels, stationery vessels, plant equipment and truck equipment. I'm just wondering why it was lumped in together with vessels.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to delay the proceedings. My director has no rationale for why that was put in this year. We'll get that rationale for the member.

MR. FOX: In respect to elevator inspections, I note on page 21 that the total in respect of permits issued and the number of inspections is quite far apart. Can the Minister give the rationale of how often the elevators are inspected and also how up-to-date those inspections are?

I recall that last year there was a number of elevators that were brought to the attention, or elevators that were operating that had no certificates. Now whether those certificates had been not issued or whether they had just not been placed in place, was one of the questions that was raised. The other question was that was the Minister's inspection up-to-date at that time, and I believe, if my memory is correct, that he said they were a little behind. They were trying to catch up. Can he

indicate what the status of inspections is at the present time, in respect to elevator inspections?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, without trying to skate around the question, I am advised that some elevators, because of age, in particular are inspected more than once a year and the majority of them get inspection once a year. We have some that we in fact inspect more than one time a year and others we try to get at least once a year.

The division tells me that they're reasonably satisfied with the inspection procedures that are in place.

On the other 260, the Director tells me that it doesn't matter whether I wait until tonight or tomorrow, the rationale simply was, they thought they'd lump them all together and give an explanation for it. I think in reviewing the statistics that the member pointed out, that possibly next year he'll find that they're back to the 260 or 280 or 220 or whatever it is, is back in a column by itself to clear up that confusion and obviously to save the questions.

MR. FOX: It might save a question next, it won't save a question this year, because the inspections and the existing installations and the number of certificates issued don't match. If they are all checked, I would like to know whether some of those vessels didn't get certificates after inspection. I would assume, that some of the inspections were taken, like the Minister said, more than once and that's why there would be more in totals in respect to inspections, then there are existing installations. But if they were separated out, it would be easier to translate which ones are being inspected and how often, in respect to existing installations and the number of certificates issued, because they should come close together in respect to the number of installations.

Getting back to the elevators, it's the same problem, that permits were issued to a certain number of elevators, but the inspections were far less than the number of elevators that there are, and if I take the Minister as correct, when he says they have at least one inspection a year, then someplace or other the statistics don't match. I am under the assumption and I may be corrected on this, but I do believe some of these permits are issued on a two year basis and some possibly even on a three year basis. If I'm wrong I'd like to be informed, because otherwise the number of inspections and the number of permits would have to be equal. Can the Minister give us a rationale on that?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the explanation has been given to me that some of the elevators do not require annual inspections and that is the controversy here, but they do in fact require annual permits.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask the Minister a question, it's one that I asked him last year. It wasn't that there wasn't inspection but there was problems with vandalism in some of the elevators where they were removing the certificates

and I just wondered if there has been any brought to the Minister's or the department's attention this year, because there were elevators in service last year that were operating, I imagine with the proper permits and licence to do so, but when one went into the elevator they found out that the permits were missing.

I must say the ones that I drew to the Minister's attention were put back and they were put back with some pretty good screws, that evidently the vandals couldn't get off. But is this a problem in some of the elevators that we are licensing or issuing permits for in the province?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, it is a problem. I have a problem in my own apartment block. They've used some pretty good screws in there, but I guess somebody's got a good penknife or a thumbnail, because they keep taking that damn thing out too. It is a problem. We haven't been able to devise a complete solution for it. We do advise agencies, organizations, people that own hotels and buildings that if they would make us aware that they're down then or ourselves when we're going through . . . You know it's a co-operative sort of a thing and we think we're doing better at it and we think the general public, surely to goodness has become a little more knowledgable and conscious of the fact that the damn thing should be left there period.

MR. JENKINS: I thank the Minister for that and I can assure him that any time I see an elevator without one, I will certainly notify him.

I would like to just ask a question on the number of licences that were issued under The Electrician's Act. There were 3,561 certificates issued for the period under that we're reviewing here and I see that there was a number of examinations conducted. The conduction of examinations are for apprentices coming out of their time. Is that correct, the 53 that show there, because I see the figure on the right-hand side in number of certificates issued, including renewals with a figure 1 behind it and underneath it says includes journeyman's licences to apprentices who have completed their apprenticeship? I was just wondering if the left-hand figure is the amount of apprentices that came out of their time, had their examinations and received their license. Is that correct?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, in that particular column, it does not relate to apprentices. It's to people that have been working within the industry and wish to attempt to write an exam, and those are the number of exams that we personally carried out with people who grandfathered their way into semi-professional trades; people who wanted to take a shot at writing the exam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2.(b)(2) — pass; 2.(c)(1) — The Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Yes, Mr. Chairman. This is the Fire Prevention Department and if the Minister wishes to make a statement before, I would be quite willing to listen. If not, I have some questions I would like to ask the Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, this Fire Prevention Branch, the branch referred to as the

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

office of the Fire Commissioner, administers part II of The Fire Prevention Act and related regulations.

The office of the Fire Commissioner promotes fire prevention and protection practises to reduce loss of life and property in the Province, pertaining to fires, prevention, establishing cause and origin of fires and suppression of arson. It may establish a central fire college and training programs for fire officers, firefighters and other persons in fire prevention and fire protection practices. It may assist municipalities by giving advice on adequacy of water supplies, the enactment of fire by-laws, the establishment of mutual aid areas and a provision of adequate fire apparatus. The office of the Fire Commissioner may also collect and disseminate information with regard to fires in the province.

During 1981 and 1982, the office of the Fire Commissioner will expand its fire prevention and protection program in the north, through the training facility, which is situated in Thompson. The branch proposes to provide courses on the control of dangerous goods to all the fire services in the north and to initiate an industrial training program under the Canada Manpower and Industrial Training Program to provide training and fire prevention and fire protection to the mining industry.

The office of the Fire Commissioner also provides regional training through emergency services i.e. fire, police and ambulance personnel throughout the province on the control of dangerous goods. The branch is presently negotiating with Canada Manpower to provide industrial fire training programs in areas other than the mining industry. These training programs will be in addition to the present training now being offered to paid and volunteer fire departments and institutional personnel.

On this subject, I'd like to inform you that the Office of the Fire Commissioner has been requested to provide advance training to full-time fire departments. To facilitate this training, the branch proposes to establish a training facility in Brandon over the course of the next two or three years. The first phase of this project is contained in the Capital Expenditures of the Department of Government Services. I should tell the Members just so they know, that the figure established this year is \$450,000. I suspect that's 40 or 50 percent of the way. Now I don't know what the final tenders, of course, on the project will be, but we suspect that it's well on its way to establishing the Fire College. —(Interjection)— I just wanted to finish if I could.

The expansion in services will be possible through our existing and proposed training facilities and by the addition of one SMY to be located in Thompson. It is also necessary to provide one additional SMY in the Fire Investigation Section to cope with the volume of investigations which the branch is required to perform. Staffing, with respect to staffing in the office of the Fire Commissioner, last year there were 29 staff man years and this year we are requesting 31 — oh, pardon me, last year was 29.05; this year it's 31.05 — an increase of two staff man years. As I've indicated, one of the new positions will be located in Thompson and will work on the fire training activities in the new Thompson training centre and in the major centres in the north. One additional staff man year will be added to the Fire Investigation Section to help cope with the volume of

investigations and cases which the branch is required to handle.

MR. JENKINS: Just before I proceed, my colleague has brought some coffee in here for the staff if they want to help themselves, and the Minister. It's there at the front if you wish to help yourself, and Mr. Chairman.

I thank the Minister. We're not trying to corrupt you in any way, I don't think, Mr. Chairman.

When we started the Estimates of the Department of Labour, I made some comment at that time that I would like to discuss some of the problems that we seem to have in fire prevention and whatnot. I want to congratulate the Minister on the prompt action that he took last year with respect to the fire at the Fairlane, 230 Fairlane, where the Commission of Inquiry was established and some very good things have come out of this.

I also see that, and I just have to go back because the question that I want to ask the Minister is one that is sort of related to the Building Standards Board which has developed a course for building inspectors; this course will be available during the summer of 1981. While we all want to work towards prevention of fires, once a fire is in progress we have to make sure that the proper building standards have been carried out in the construction of that building, especially with respect to fire walls, elevator shafts, other things that cause fires to rapidly get out of hand, especially in our society today where we hear, and I guess that he will as we approach the 21st century. More and more people are not going to be living in individual homes, they are going to be living in what I call cliff dwellings. When you get a number of people living together in a confined space, in close proximity to each other, the incidence of accidental fires, and I'm not talking about fires that are deliberately set under arson, that is another problem, but the fact that just by accidental use of cooking, heating, that we take as our ordinary day course of living, these accidents when they happen in high-rise dwellings or multiple dwellings where many people are living in a very small space, actually on ground, but if it was spread out over an area would be quite an area if they were individual housing units; so when we have a fire in one of these places the equipment, the other means of fighting these fires, are getting to be altogether different to what fire brigades and fire prevention officers have had to deal with in the past.

We have only to look at the recent incidents that have taken place too, in the City of Toronto, with the hotel fires; the same thing can happen in high-rise apartments. We have had problems in Las Vegas, I think, within a period of a couple of months, two major fires, tremendous losses of life. In some cases arson may have been suspected; as I say, that's a problem that we'll always have, but there are not proper controls in the buildings for smoke inhalation; fire alarm systems.

The Fire Advisory Committee, according to your report, Mr. Minister, and their three subcommittees have met 40 times to discuss matters concerning the fire service in Manitoba, the development of a proposed 1981 Manitoba Fire code. And this is the line that interests me, "The development of alternative regulations to provide for the upgrading of existing buildings and all aspects of fire alarms

including local alarm systems, central reporting systems, as well as telephone reporting systems”.

Is the Minister going to have his Building Inspection Course that he is setting up under the Mechanical Engineering Department; are they going to be brought up-to-date when this course is set up. With the new developments that the Minister hopes that this Fire Advisory Committee will come up with regulations I would be very interested in knowing just how he is going to dovetail, because you can't separate the one from the other, even though we have fire prevention and that is, in the main, what we are striving for here. If we are going to prevent fires and lessen, because once a fire has commenced then we don't want to have to go back to a situation such as we had at the Fairlane complex where we now the Minister and the City of Winnipeg have ordered that there must be extensive renovations made to make these places as fire safe and as fire proof as possible.

So I would hope that when the Minister is dealing with these two, the setting up of the building inspector's course under the building standards, that at the same time he would look at the fire regulations and make sure that this is part and parcel of the curriculum that will be for these people who are in the building inspection staff. If there are alternative regulations, as the report here states, for the upgrading of the existing buildings, perhaps that is one of the reasons why he wants more building inspectors because I think that some of the buildings that we have in place today, especially multiple dwelling buildings, all we need is one fire that could be of a bad nature and we could have quite a loss of life. I would suggest to the Minister quite sincerely, I'm not trying to criticize him or anything, but I would suggest that if he is sincere in setting up that building inspectors course that with it should be entailed also the hope that the regulations that he is going to set in place, never mind whether the standards, if the Minister and this committee in their wisdom decide that certain regulations are of such a nature that buildings that were built ten years ago don't come up to standard, well then I think that they should be brought up to standard. I would appreciate very much if the Minister could give us his thoughts on the dovetailing of these two courses together.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the Member from Logan has touched on several points and I'll try and speak to them all. The training program for building inspectors will be working in conjunction with the Education Committee of the Building Standards Board which, of course, ultimately involves your Fire Commissioner's office in a series of overlapping throughout the system. We've had approximately 35 to 40 requests from inspectors and from municipalities to put on a training course for them; certainly any new additions or present legislation that is in place will be brought to their attention at that particular time.

The Provincial Fire Advisory Committee has several subcommittees, as I think the member would appreciate, one of them is working right now on highrise upgrading. It's called The Upgrading of Existing Building's Committee which is a subcommittee of your Provincial Fire Advisory Committee. Winnipeg is presently upgrading, under

their bylaw, a lot of the buildings with the city and it's our understanding that Brandon is moving in that direction. We'll be bringing in new regulations shortly as I have announced in the House and I told the members that we'll be bringing in new regulations. Part of them, and the reason that they weren't already in place, was because of the Fairlane situation. We wanted to be inclusive of the recommendations of the McDermot Report as close as possible; yes, we're concerned about those types of housing too and I want to say to the member that I appreciate, on behalf of myself and our Fire Commissioner's office, his congratulations on the speed on which we moved to resolve that situation. I should say that a lot of my staff and the Building Standards Board, comprised of all segments of society, worked extremely hard trying to get that report together; trying to get the recommendations together. I know some of my staff travelled personally with me all over the province when we dealt with Altona and Portage, Brandon, The Pas and the other areas to bring to the attention of the officials in those particular areas that there is the possibility of buildings within their jurisdiction that may have a problem as related to the study, the McDermot Report, and the Fairlane Apartment thing.

MR. JENKINS: Well, I thank the Minister for that information. Will this also take into account existing hotel facilities since these are also multiple dwelling facilities, the same as apartment buildings, especially since we have now become a large convention city. We had an incident here last year; I don't know whether it's gone to the courts or not but I think there was suspected arson involved. I congratulate somebody that there wasn't a greater loss of life involved in that hotel fire. I would hope that the upgrading of regulations and the upgrading of the facility would include hotels in the city of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba because I think it behooves us, as I have said before, we are now starting to become a convention city with our new convention hall here. When people come into a city, as strangers, they certainly want the assurance; they want to go into a facility that is as reasonably safe as human hands can make it. I tell you, I've never been to Las Vegas but after reading of some of the things that have taken place in some of the two hotel fires that took place in the city of Las Vegas, I certainly don't have it under my itinerary that I intend to visit that place and stay in any hotels there. (Interjection)— Not the top floor the Member for Churchill said, but I don't think I'd even want to be on the bottom floor. I would hope that the upgrading regulations would also include hotels throughout the Province of Manitoba, motels, anything where there is multiple dwelling.

I just wanted to know if the Minister could assure me that they are included, I'm not quite finished yet.

MR. MacMASTER: We're talking about all Class E Residential which is inclusive of hotels.

MR. JENKINS: In your report, Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, the Fire Commissioner's Office has an investigation section. I would like to know just what training does the investigation section undergo, I mean is this a section within your department or do you use the services of existing

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

Police Departments, Fire Departments, with the information gained from them. But if you have an investigation section and it states that there is fatal fires, major fires, suspicious or arson fires and other fires with a cause and/or origin are in doubt are investigated by the investigation section. I would like to know just what type of training, if you have an investigation section, these people have. Are they experts in the field of fire investigation and what training have they received? Have they received training from Fire Departments and forensic services of various Police Departments?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, they go through the run of our own courses that we put on at the Brandon University and the Brandon Fire College. They attend Canadian Fire Investigation Courses, the Canadian ones. By and large the majority of them have taken courses that are now being presented in the United States which are of very high calibre, and they all have either police background or they have been put through police training before they qualify and before they are put on the type of investigations that the member is talking about.

MR. JENKINS: I thank the Minister for that information. How many people do we have in the investigation section at the present time?

MR. MasMASTER: Three in Winnipeg, one in Brandon — we're requesting in these Estimates for one additional one.

MR. JENKINS: Where would this person be located? Are there any Northern Manitoba?

MR. MasMASTER: Winnipeg, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JENKINS: This extra person would be for the City of Winnipeg.

MR. MacMASTER: Yes.

MR. JENKINS: If a fire of any consequence, where there is suspicion of arson or anything else, happens in the north, the investigation then would be carried out by the investigative officers from the Winnipeg Branch, would that be correct? There's no thought of stationing an investigative officer in the north at the present time?

MR. MacMASTER: Not at the moment.

MR. JENKINS: I thank the Minister for that information.

Now one of the problems that we're having in today's society with our energy shortage and the high cost of energy is people are starting to install wood burning devices in their homes. I remember watching on television one night, I think it was on 24 Hours not too long ago, but shortly before retiring the Fire Chief of the City of Winnipeg was being interviewed and he stated that one of the real problems that the City of Winnipeg is having is with people installing wood burning devices in their homes, especially fireplaces with zero clearance that are not being properly installed.

I know there has been some information put out on this but in the City of Winnipeg or say in the province, if I was to install a zero clearance wood

burning fireplace in my house, I know I would certainly want to get the best information and I'd certainly want to have an inspection, but I want to know is it compulsory that an inspection be made after the installation of this device?

There is creosote buildup in chimneys and since people have not been burning that type of fuel for many, many years, many of our younger people have been raised on gas and oil furnaces, not even the old coal bomber that we used to hand fire down in the basement. I just wonder what kind of inspection, what kind of information there is. When you go to dealers that are selling this equipment, they tell you there are certain precautions that have to be taken but is there anything coming from the Fire Commissioner's Office itself dealing with certain regulations that have to be met? It's all right to have a zero clearance fireplace, you stick it up against a piece of two-by-four that's right along side the heat, eventually it's going to start that thing on fire. I think that the Minister was saying last year that they were going to put out some pamphlets that would be available at dealers, at suppliers of this type of equipment that would draw to the attention of people that they had to be careful, that it just simply wasn't a case of sticking a fireplace in and then throwing a fire in it and the thing would be all right. If the Minister has anything on this and whether there is any inspection I would be pleased to hear it.

MR. MacMASTER: Again I'll attempt to address myself to the majority of the points that the member has raised. The City has the responsibility, they've been delegated, the City has that responsibility. In Brandon, we understand that now, now being in the last short period of time that they are requiring themselves a building permit. We have, in fact, prepared an information pamphlet outlining possible problems associated with such appliances; we have put together a comprehensive and provincial information booklet detailing methods of proper use and installation and I just asked one of our people to chase someone and get copies of it. We have copies here which I am prepared to give to the member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Logan covered some of the area that I was going to discuss. I would just like to follow up in respect to whether the Fire Commissioner's office has done any research into special and innovative measures in respect to high-rise fire fighting and evacuation. I know that they have instituted that elevators get locked in case of fire and only the Fire Department can use them, but sometimes this isn't sufficient. Can we get any kind of an update as to what other methods of evacuation we have available or are being looked at? I know we looked at TV and so on and we hear of the fires that took place in Vegas where they had helicopters rescuing people, and I'm just wondering whether any of these are being implemented or whether they're being contemplated as contingency measures and what other research is being done to make certain that we do not have fatalities in case of these high rises.

The other area that I'd like to receive information on if it's available is whether we have done any research into evacuation of disabled and senior

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

citizens, because many of them cannot walk stairs in the condition they're in and many of them do live in high rises and may have difficulty being evacuated. I see the Chairman smiling at me, it must be a question he wanted to ask.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is sent down the line, I'm not getting any response to it.

MR. FOX: The word evacuation didn't give you a problem did it?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that we do work with the city on evacuation plans in apartments. I don't have that document in front of me. There's certain methodologies that they wish to use — example two floors up and two floors down, keeping away from the particular floor where the smoke is indicating the fire, and we are working with departments outside the City, that's more our direct responsibility, in efforts to have evacuation plans in place, but to say here that evacuation plans are in place throughout the province would be incorrect. It's something that we're working at with the local municipal authorities wherever they may. In the area we're sitting in, we're working with the City Fire Department on that type of thing.

MR. FOX: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for that and I would be appreciative if I could get further updating on procedures that are being looked at.

Secondly, I'd like to ask whether there is any emphasis on hotels where we have a transient population to more rigidly enforce their standards and also their particular equipment, because as has been indicated in other fires, not necessarily in Winnipeg, fire doors have been locked, alarms have been turned off because they annoyed the clientele and I think that this is an area where also for the sake of those people who are clients of the premises, there should be greater publicity, maybe more information in the particular area so that people can see and visually be alerted as to what procedures they should take in case of fire. Is any of that being followed in our hotels at the present time to any greater extent than it has been in the past?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the hotels will be part of the upgrading procedures that we're now reviewing, the Sub-Committee of the Provincial Fire Advisory Board is now reviewing. We are putting together coincidentally and have been working on it for a month or two, a pamphlet that we are going to have in all hotels in the Province of Manitoba. In addition to that we are going to upgrade if you wish the type of notice that is available within each particular hotel room and that notice certainly won't be a permanent sort of a thing because as the member has pointed out, new evacuation methods, new exiting procedures, that type of thing is always being upgraded so the area of the notice in the room is going to be hopefully on an ongoing basis, upgrading the types of notices they have in their room and we are at this very moment preparing a pamphlet that we will be distributing to all hotels in the Province of Manitoba. We've been working on that for a period of time.

MR. FOX: May I ask the Minister how often the premises are inspected, because as I indicated a

little earlier, in some of these places because of vandalism or other reasons the alarms are turned off and then sometimes not reset? Can the Minister give us an approximate number of inspections that will take place and whether he's had any particular areas under his jurisdiction that have had more false alarms, more vandalism than other areas in regard to fire alarms?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, within the city it is the City's responsibility; they're designated that responsibility. Outside the city there's other groups that do in fact investigate hotels and check while they're investigating — example, the Liquor Commissioner's Department when they investigate a hotel part of their procedure is assuring themselves that the fire alarm systems are working and working adequately.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, Arnold Brown (Rhineland): Mr. Schroeder . . . Mr. Cowan.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. In the past we have been supportive of the Minister in respect to some initiatives and innovative programs that he has put in place in this department and given the information contained in the Annual Report of this year and given the information that we have been provided with so far, I think that we had placed our support correctly and that there are many positive things being done in this particular area for which the Minister should be commended.

We have been harsh in our criticism of the Minister in areas where we thought it was justifiable and I think that in all fairness we should be strongly supportive of the Minister and congratulatory in areas where we think that that is justified too and this is one of those areas.

The Minister will recall in our conversations and debates during the last couple of years that we were pleased to see the action that was taken. We felt that it was a necessary action. We were pleased to see the manner in which the Minister was proceeding with this particular aspect of his department, this particular area. I think that we have been justified in that support and justified in our congratulations and the Minister should be in fact congratulated for his efforts here. We only wish that he'd acted as fast in some other areas, but let's not spoil a good congratulations by dwelling on that. He does deserve our support, at least my support and my congratulations. I can't speak for my caucus in this respect although I'm certain they'll agree. Especially in the north, if I can be parochial about it and I know the Minister will allow me because that's an area of special concern to himself as well, that the action that they have taken in Northern Manitoba in respect to fire control and fire prevention and enabling residents of communities to put together effective firefighting facilities and teams has been admirable and has been exceptional. I use that strong terminology because I think it has.

Now I have to as well extend those congratulations somewhat to the Federal Government because it was a joint federal-provincial program, the Northlands Agreement, which allowed for much of the work to be done but I don't want to take away any of the

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

credit from the Minister. When I do that it's just a way of recognizing that the Federal Government had some input into the northern activities as well. The Minister had indicated last January — I'm certain no one will take offence to my reading from the Estimates of last year when I'm congratulating the Minister and he had indicated that, and I quote him, "The northern community aspect of the program is extremely important." He has put his action and his money where his mouth was on that. He's done a very good job; it was basically a sound program. In many respects it was an excellent program. There were some problem areas, the Minister and I have discussed them privately. The Minister and I have discussed publicly but there are always going to be problem areas, innovative and far-reaching programs.

I think that the record will very clearly indicate that the problem areas in this particular aspect of the program have been less than one would normally expect from any given initiative that was as innovative as this one was. Their upgrading of the equipment in the communities, their preventative educational programs in the communities, their preventative inspection programs in the communities and their capital investments and equipment that was necessary in the program in the area have all shown that this is obviously a priority area with the Minister and I believe is justifiably a priority area because it is an area of great need. I don't mean to belittle any of the efforts in any other part of the province that have been done in this program; however, I think I can speak best of that which has been done in the north. I know that in fact the efforts have paid off and I know that the Minister does not intend to rest upon his record in respect to this but he's going to continue to develop this type of program until such a time as he is satisfied and the people of the north are satisfied that there is a first-class program fully in place and fully functioning. I think we're well on the way to that sort of program.

If one looks through the Annual Reports and I think it's a matter that should be put on the record because we are quick to put on the record areas where we think the Minister has been less than forceful in his action and where we think he has taken the wrong step. So let's put on the record as strongly, and as well, when we believe he has acted very well in respect to a problem. We see, if we look under the Table No. 6 which is Inspections Conducted under The Fire Preventions Act that in all cases we see a great improvement in the number of inspections, the number of re-inspections, the number of requirements for the removal or correction of hazards and in fact almost a doubling or not quite a doubling of the hazards removed. Those hazards are those hazards which create fires and which lead to the loss of life, injury and property. So I think that the Minister should be commended for that.

If we look throughout the whole section under The Fire Preventions Act and under the office of the Fire Commissioner, we will find that in fact great progress has been made. I've commended the Minister, I wish as well to commend the Minister's staff because he didn't do it alone. He obviously has good staff working with him in this area as he does throughout his department. I don't mean to take away from any

of the other staff by giving special commendation to this staff. I just think that it's a combination of a prioritization of a problem area and a combination of good staff and it's shown the type of results that can be done and can be accomplished when one puts a priority on a certain problem. We will suggest from time to time that sort of priority be put on other problems we have and we will continue to do so but I think this is an example area and I don't want to drag the committee out commending the Minister; it's not my usual practice and I know that I might be embarrassing him in this regard, I don't mean to but I think that we should be fair.

Having said that, there are a number of questions, not criticisms. Oh, there is one criticism and it's a minor criticism albeit but a criticism nonetheless. The Minister has just given to my colleague, the Member for Logan, a report which is called "The Safe Use of Solid Fuel Appliances" put out by the Manitoba Department of Labour and Manpower and I direct his attention to Page 9(a) and I believe it might also be on Page 9 where it's recommended that asbestos material be used as a backing for clearance between a flue pipe and protected combustible construction around ducts. So that I think that the Minister should take a look at that and see if the recommendation of asbestos is in fact in keeping with the latest information that is available to us concerning the hazards of asbestos. I know it's mentioned in the report that there are several different types of asbestos, asbestos millboard; in one instance, it's asbestos cement board, in one instance it's cellular asbestos. I think the millboard and the cement board might be approved uses, I'm not going to comment as to the advisability of approving those materials that go into the houses. I'm not certain about cellular asbestos though and I'd ask the Minister to check into that because it may be an area that has escaped the attention of the department. The Minister being the Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health Division, having all the information on asbestos available to him, may wish to take that under advisement. I would hope he would be able to report back to us as to the acceptability of that material and the appropriateness of suggesting that material be used, but that is a very minor criticism when taken into consideration the other congratulations which we have given the Minister.

Last year, the Minister indicated that the branch proposed to establish a training site in Thompson and to carry out practical fire training. I had asked him if he can update us as to the activities in respect to the development of that training site and the activities of those persons in that training site since it has been developed.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the completion date of the facility is early this year; now that's in the next month or two. The centre is situated on approximately eight acres of ground which will be provided with a burn house for practical training for up to 25 candidates at one particular time. We feel that we are going to run a very minimum of 10 courses this year which will involve 150 candidates for that course. Now those courses aren't firmed up but that's what I've been led to believe is the minimum that will go through that site this year.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. The Minister also indicated in last year's Estimates that a

lot of the activity that was being done in Northern Manitoba was done under the Northlands Agreement and as we know the Northlands Agreement is going to expire in March of this year, I believe, and we've had this discussion with the Minister before in respect to other matters but I'd like to examine the expiration of this program, the Northlands Agreement, in respect to the fire training programs which are very innovative and very important. Can the Minister give us the specific assurance that he gave us in a general sort of way a couple of days ago that programs under the Northlands Agreement that are currently being conducted under the Office of the Fire Commissioner will be extended and will continue on uninterrupted even if the Northlands Agreement is not ratified by the expiry date of March 31, 1981?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the fire training is provided by the Fire Commissioner's Office, funded out of there. The equipment was cost shared with the Federal Government. I think the Federal Government — and I'm not going to negotiate at the table here — but I think it's fair to say they would be hard-pressed to try and not include that type of continuation of funding under the new agreement. As we've said before, the major issues facing the negotiators at the table at this particular time is how in fact to have an extension if in fact the agreement is not signed and that includes of course the carrying on of a program that's now in place. So I do not have any basic fears that the federal portion of this particular program will be withdrawn in any way, shape or form.

MR. COWAN: I'm not going to ask the obvious hypothetical question, what if the Minister's non fears were not realized? However, I just want to point out the importance of the Northlands Agreement in respect to the activities of this department in Northern Manitoba, again being somewhat parochial in the matter, but that there were a great number of inspections carried out under the Northlands Agreement, that there were a great number of educational training activities carried out under the Northlands Agreement. I think that list is worthy of reading off. There were 91 community committees or councils that held meetings, 26 meetings of fire departments and 24 miscellaneous meetings for a total of — and I'm doing this very very quickly — approximately 500 to 600 persons in attendance. There were 114 consultations of government at all levels; there were 98 consultations with fire chiefs; four with fire prevention officers; three with fire service instructors and three more with school or school division officials, held under the provision of the Northlands Agreement and again that was several hundred persons who were in attendance at those meetings. There 30 fire department training sessions; 39 fire protection surveys and 11 pumper tests that were done under this particular agreement, the Northlands Agreement. Those are all very admirable programs and we hope to see them continue. So even if the Federal Government were to not live up to the responsibility and that's always a possibility; we can't rule it out entirely. I do hope that the Minister can give us a commitment that they will maintain that level of activity because it is so very important to an area like Northern Manitoba that has

to be brought up to date, where you have to correct some historical injustices and some historical problems that had not been corrected in the past.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the fire training will in fact continue because it is funded out of the Fire Commissioner's Office. The hypothetical question as to what I would do if the Federal Government said no, as a man who has negotiated a fair amount in his life, I found it's not to your advantage to make public what your alternate position would be. The people across the table sometimes feel then that they can negotiate in a different vein, so my position today is that there is no ultimate position. Things shall continue, period, bottom line, end of conversation.

MR. COWAN: That's exactly why I suggested I wasn't going to ask a hypothetical question . . .

MR. MacMASTER: But you asked it.

MR. COWAN: . . . but I guess I left the door open too much in that case. I have no further questions and again I very seldom end when I should. I have no further questions but I do just wish to once again congratulate the Minister and his department and the many people in Northern Manitoba who have worked very hard to make this program as successful as it has been. I hope that the Minister on my behalf will extend those congratulations to those individuals when he gets an opportunity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: I just have a couple of questions here to the Minister. The alternative regulations that he is working on, could he give us a time frame when he figures that this will be in place, when he will have these regulations?

MR. MacMASTER: The best we can tell the Member for Logan is another two to three months.

MR. JENKINS: I have just one more question that I want to raise with the Minister and it deals with the solid fuel appliances themselves. There are many on the market today and there has been complaints. I'm sure the Minister has heard some of the complaints, that some of them are not what they're advertised to be, that they don't seem to come up to the glowing reports that the manufacturers are making of these. Has there been any testing, or is there any testing contemplated on some of these solid fuel appliances? If some of the equipment is hazardous, then I think it should be drawn to the attention of the public, and especially since I have been reading and hearing a lot about the equipping of fireplaces with fire safety doors of a glass fabricated nature — where we hear that water splashing on them or a sudden rush of air, or various other things will cause these things to explode. I would just like to know if the department is doing any research on this, or has any access to any research that has been done on this and would the Minister, if they are doing so, contemplate trying to make the public aware of some of the hazards of some of the solid fuel appliances that are being put in place.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the equipment that the Member is talking about should have a CSA

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

stamp on it, or the Underwriter Laboratories of Canada. Those are the two bodies that should be approving the particular appliance that the member is talking about.

MR. JENKINS: Yes, I quite agree with the Minister, but some of the complaints that I have been hearing concerns equipment that has the Underwriter Laboratories sticker, or the Canadian Standards Association sticker on them, especially the ones on the fire doors that are being put in place on fireplaces in order to improve the efficiency of the fireplace, so that you're not having all your heat going up the chimney. This seems to be an area where there are a lot of complaints and evidently there are some accidents happening from some of the fire doors actually exploding under certain circumstances, and I wondered if the department is looking into that matter.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, we are aware of some of the alleged deficiencies. We're also aware that in a some cases, in a large number of cases — and I'm not going to talk about percentages — there is installation problems, that's part of the problem we're facing. The doors have been brought to our attention and the Underwriter Laboratories of Canada, right today, are reviewing and reassessing the quality and type of doors that are being permitted to be used on those appliances, so the Member raises a point that is right today being examined by the Underwriter Laboratories of Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN, Morris McGregor (Virden): 2.(c)(1) — pass; 2.(c)(2) — pass; 2.(d)(1) — pass. The Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: This might be a suitable time for the Committee to rise. If we get into Employment Standards it will be . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm at the mercy of the Committee and the Minister.
Committee rise.

SUPPLY — GOVERNMENT SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, Abe Kovnats (Radisson): Committee will come to order. I direct the honourable members attention to Page 69 of the Main Estimates, Department of Government Services, Resolution No. 71, Clause 3, Supply and Services, Item (a)(1) Salaries — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Chairman, we discussed this matter earlier today when I asked the Minister about where it would be appropriate to discuss the restaurants and food catering of the government and he suggested this was the area. I wanted to begin by asking him if he could give us a general outline of which caterers are being utilized by the Provincial Government and Department of Government Services in the various buildings, if he has that breakdown or if he can tell us if this outfit has so many restaurants and this one has so many, etc. I'm particularly interested in the operation

downstairs and the operation over at the Woodsworth Building.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Chairman, we had passed that item but the specific question that was posed by my honourable friend I can get him that information if he'd just bear with us for a moment.

In response to the specific question posed by my honourable friend I can tell him that Ritz Foods Ltd., are catering in the Legislative Building, the Manitoba Archives Building, the Norquay Building, the Manitoba Building and the Woodsworth Building. The contracts for the Legislative Building expires on November 11, 1982; Manitoba Archives Building expires on September 30, 1982; the contract for the Norquay Building expires on September 30, 1982 and the Manitoba Building, September 30, 1982; and the Woodsworth Building expires at the same time as the contract in the Legislative Building which is November 11, 1982.

FSM Food Services are catering in the Highway Services Building and the Robert Fletcher Building and both of those contracts expire at the end of September, 1982. S. Martin caters at the Beausejour Provincial Office Building and that contract is carried on from month to month. Tastee Bakery are caterers in the Portage la Prairie Provincial Office Building and that contract expires in October of 1983. Larry De Vries at the Dauphin Provincial Office Building, the contract expiring in June, 1982 and Beaver Foods Ltd. at the Brandon Provincial Office Building and that contract is carried on a monthly basis.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, just to clarify then, do I understand then that Ritz Foods is in fact the caterers in this building and the Woodsworth Building and the Norquay Building?

MR. JORGENSEN: Correct.

MR. DOERN: What I wanted to say to the Minister is that I think there was a feeling in the past that it might be a good idea to try to have one or more caterers in the downtown core area, those being the three major buildings with the most employees, and that the idea might be that people might have a greater variety of choice and possibly — I know this would appeal to the Minister — that this would be competition and it might elicit some rivalry and some benefit in terms of price or quality or variety. So I simply mention that to the Minister, that by allowing somebody to bid in a block, or to bid the Legislature and the Woodsworth Building in one block and then allow them to also have a series of other contracts, that this point may have been lost.

I wanted to tell the Minister that I suppose we would all have personal observations on the various restaurants. I try to occasionally go over to the Woodsworth Building to see how things are, but basically like most members I tend to eat here when we're in the area in between sessions as well as during sessions. The restaurant which used to be open a number of nights during the week for the convenience of members is now basically closed other than on Monday nights when it's open for the convenience of the New Democratic Caucus so that

we can plot the overthrow of the government in relative quiet and after a good meal. While we're rocking around the clock, we may start working around the clock pretty soon.

Mr. Chairman, my observation on the restaurant here is that the food quality hasn't been too bad, it has more or less held. I certainly find that in terms of the quality of the service, I don't know if it's a batch of new employees or just what the problem is, but it seems like a lot of the staff — I'm talking now partly evening staff that works Monday night and partly daytime staff — doesn't seem to really know the business, doesn't seem to really have any training. I suppose this is different from the other restaurants which are all buffet-style; nearly all the other restaurants, if not all of them, are simply through the line, through the soup line and pick up your own food and go to the cashier but here, of course, there is service. I don't know whether the people are untrained or whether the wages are not being paid, but I have to say to the Minister that some of the people working have no idea of what it is to serve a meal. I say that, I think, with some knowledge of the subject because I worked for four summers on the CPR in the dining cars and at Lake Louise as a waiter, so when I see somebody who's waiting on tables I think I have an idea of whether or not they know what they're doing, or whether they haven't the faintest idea. I simply have to say that some of the staff I've seen recently are totally untrained and have no conception of what they're doing.

I wanted to ask the Minister about the shift that was made a year or two ago in terms of the Maitre d' of our restaurant, who was formerly, I suppose, paid by the Department of Government Services and then was put onto the staff of Ritz and, no sooner had that happened, when he was fired. I find this somewhat distressing in that the man in question, Mr. Burton, appeared to be doing an excellent job. I get some support from my colleagues, a lot of support I'm told from my own backbench, about the job this gentleman was doing. He had probably some 15 to 20 years in the business, most of it at the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, where he is now apparently employed again and also had worked at the Winnipeg Inn and probably other places so he had a professional background. He had a fine personality; he was a friendly person, immaculately groomed. I am now getting support from my friend, the MLA for — I don't know, are you the MLA for St. Johns yet? — (Interjection) — The future MLA for St. Johns. I have to tell the MLA for Gladstone that Conservatives are as rare in St. Johns as New Democrats are in Gladstone, so that he understands the lie of the land.

So, Mr. Chairman, I say that I was somewhat taken aback. I was disappointed when the government replaced or turfed out John Jaschinski from the Woodsworth Building and I was disappointed when they replaced Mr. Burton because things seemed to be okay there. There was apparently some profit being made in the restaurant in the sense that the profit from liquor sales accrued to the government. There was no rent being paid there and for four years or more the gentleman in question ran the restaurant, took the bookings, seated people, talked to people, trained the staff, ran the bar and the cash register and set the tables and helped wait on tables

and worked at night and appeared to be doing a totally satisfactory job; then all of a sudden he is axed, I guess at age 55 which starts to get a bit dicey, and I think this was rather shabby treatment. So I just wonder whether the Minister feels that he can justify this action or whether he had any say, or anyone in the department had any say, or whether the decision was sealed sometime ago when the government decided to throw this job into the Ritz contract as opposed to being a government employee working with Ritz. Maybe it was sealed at that time and once that decision was taken it was only a matter of time before the gentleman would be replaced. So I ask the Minister if he has any comment on that firing.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, the contract that my honourable friend speaks of is one that had expired in, I believe it was March of 1980. At that time a new caterer had taken over the job in both the Woodsworth Building and here in the Legislative Building. If my honourable friend will recall the winning caterer was the one that had tendered on both these buildings. Prior to that time the maitre d' that my friend speaks of, was an employee of the government whose term expired in March of 1980. We found the anomalous situation where an employee of the government was giving the direction and providing the instructions to the staff who were not our employees but were employees of the caterer.

When the new caterer came in we advised them of this situation and asked them to make whatever arrangements they felt suited them best. The situation where a government employee on staff of the government was providing direction to the caterer staff just did not seem to be one that was suitable and one that was workable, so the caterer hired Mr. Burton for a period of time and then for reasons that are known to the caterer, decided to do without his services. It wasn't a question of the government, as my Honourable friend has attempted to state, the government axing anybody, it was a question of his contract running out and the arrangement being made with a new caterer. My friend will have to ask the new caterer the reasons why he did not continue Mr. Burton's employment. Because he had the contract, it was his responsibility.

MR. DOERN: Well, I would like to ask the Minister in the new arrangement which was made by his predecessor, whether the government felt that the person in question was doing an adequate job or whether they had any complaints about his performance and whether they also attempted to protect his position by making his position a condition of the new catering contract, because a contract, I guess, can be set up or cut or sliced in a hundred different ways. So I simply ask whether the government was satisfied with his record for the past three to four years and whether they tried to protect his position by negotiating his position with the new caterer.

MR. JORGENSEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, for reasons that I have explained, and I think are valid reasons and as my Honourable friend know those events occurred before I assumed the responsibility for this

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

portfolio, but the situation where a government employee was giving direction to a caterer who had won a contract is one that was a bit dicey, and though we offered or asked the caterer to use his own discretion as to whether or not he wanted to employ Mr. Burton — and he did for a period of time — now the reasons why the caterer decided to dispense with his services, as I say, is a question that will have to be asked the caterer. I am not aware of the reasons for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I just conclude on this point and say that it is not uncommon for there to be I think, working arrangements that involve civil servants and the private sector. I mean we have all kinds of government inspectors who work with the private sector every day. They make safety inspections; they make health inspections and so on, and so on; that's not uncommon. When the government is hiring a firm of architects, such as Government Services would do, the private architects have to constantly be in touch with the Client Department to satisfy them and with the Department of Government Services as well, so I don't find it unusual or peculiar for there to be a working arrangement between a civil servant and a private firm. I think that is an everyday commonplace occurrence.

I simply say that I think that the position could have been protected and could have been continued because of the fact that the individual concerned did an excellent job and performed, to the best of my knowledge, to the satisfaction of 98 percent of the people who attended and used the restaurant. Instead, after serving the government for four years, the man comes back from his holidays and is instantly fired without notice. This seems to me to be shabby treatment for somebody who has faithfully served in a particular position and then discovers one day that they are suddenly unemployed; it certainly is a poor reward for services rendered.

MR. JORGENSEN: One further comment on the statement made by my honourable friend. In the first place, the gentleman in question was not a civil servant, he was on a contract. He knew at the time that his contract expired and he was advised, some months in advance of the expiry date of that contract, that his contract would not be renewed by the government, that if he wanted to make arrangements with the caterer that was something that he could do and indeed my understanding was that, for a period of time, that was the arrangement that was followed through. Now, as I said, my honourable friend is going to have to ask the caterer the reasons why that arrangement was not continued.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)— pass; (2) — pass.
The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I asked the Minister last night if he could provide for the Committee details of any Special Warrants that were issued by the department during the year. I wonder if the Minister has that information available now?

MR. JORGENSEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, my Deputy informs me that he did have the information. It's upstairs, he will get it and bring it down.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass; (2) — pass; (a) — pass.

(b) Central Vehicle Branch, (1) Salaries — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister a few questions here. The first one is, can he report on the makeup of the fleet in terms of small cars or compacts and intermediates and others?

MR. JORGENSEN: The question my friend asked is what percentage of the automobile fleet is made up of compacts and I can tell him that at the present time that makes up about 40 percent, not of the entire fleet, but of the car fleet.

MR. DOERN: Can the Minister explain the massive increase in expenditures on this particular item? We're jumping from 7 million to 11 million which is more than a 50 percent increase? Can he give us a breakdown of that statistic?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, there has been some difficulty in the past because of the particular arrangement that had been in effect, of some difficulty in determining the exact costs of the fleet. We have now switched to cost-recovery basis; in other words, each individual department will now be picking up the tab for the automobiles assigned to that particular department on a cost-recovery basis. In that process, there have been some problems in assessing its total value and there have been some problems in attempting to arrive at an accurate cost-estimate. We have put in place a cost-accounting system that more accurately reflects the cost and what my honourable friend is seeing in this particular item, what is represented here, is the adjustment that was necessary to bring into line the actual costs as compared to what were the estimates costs. Once that process has been done and it's done this year, we hope that our cost-accounting in future years will be such as to be able to more accurately reflect the actual costs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Point Douglas.

MR. DONALD MALINOWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Honourable Minister, talking about vehicles, would you be so kind to explain to me how many do we have? Presumably we are talking about the Province of Manitoba, how many do we own and how many do we rent? I would like to find out if it will be possible.

MR. JORGENSEN: The total number of automobiles?

MR. MALINOWSKI: How many do we own and how many do we rent? I think that we're talking about the vehicles for the whole of Manitoba, I mean from the whole province, not only for Winnipeg. I think in many different departments like the Minister said, would you give me this information, please?

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

MR. JORGENSON: There are 2,479 vehicles in the entire fleet. None are rented except perhaps the odd one on a temporary basis during the summer months when activities are increased somewhat, but essentially the fleet consists of those 2,479 automobiles.

MR. MALINOWSKI: This rented one, they are used but by which departments and where? Most of them will be in Winnipeg or outside of Winnipeg in different cities now?

MR. JORGENSON: They are used throughout the province. As one might expect, the Department of Natural Resources is the department that uses the largest percentage of vehicles. I believe is Highways is another large user; Community Services, as one might expect, would be the department that use a large number of vehicles. The remainder of them are much less than those three major departments. Just for my honourable friend's information I have the information on the rental of vehicles. There six 8-passenger vans leased to meet seasonal requirements but which were not available from the Central Vehicle Service Branch fleet and that was during a summer period.

MR. MALINOWSKI: I would like to also find out the maintenance of those cars, I have in mind like repairs, all kinds of services which a car needs, was making work for the garages which we have, like the provincial one or a private one?

MR. JORGENSON: My honourable friend asked where the maintenance is carried on, on these automobiles? Those vehicles that are primarily located, used and registered in the city, maintenance is carried on in the Central Provincial Garage; that is, in those areas that the Central Provincial Garage have a capability of carrying on maintenance. I believe there are a couple of areas where they contract out and I think transmissions is one of those areas where repairs are performed at some of the transmission companies that are located throughout the city. But essentially most of the repairs are carried on in the Central Provincial Garage when they can be carried on at that location. Now automobiles that have to have maintenance carried on in other parts of the province, of course, will have their maintenance carried on there. Brandon has a garage that does that sort of work as well. So it's not all located in one area; it depends on where the vehicle requires maintenance and what is available in the form of maintenance services.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Talking about this, would the Minister be kind enough and make a breakdown about this maintenance. Is there more in our garages? Does it mean government garages or private ones?

MR. JORGENSON: Perhaps I could advise my honourable friend. The breakdown on the Estimates of the total cost of the fleet; 12 percent of the total cost is made up of insurance on the vehicles themselves; gasoline makes up 35 percent of the total cost; repairs in outside firms makes up 27 percent; repairs at the central garage make up 16 percent; other government departments is 5 percent,

and miscellaneous costs including administration make up the remaining 5 percent.

Because of the fact, I presume, most automobiles are travelling outside the city, a larger percentage of those repairs are carried on in areas outside the central provincial garage.

MR. J. WALLY MCKENZIE (Roblin): I wonder if the Minister could advise me if there doing any experimental work with these vehicles, utilizing the new forms of energy that are on the market such as hydrogen, gasohol, some of the forms of energy that are being utilized at the university, or are we rejuvenating the all electric cars that the members opposite brought into the picture, or is the Federal Government today interested in any programs or experimental programs with the government fleet to see how these new forms of energy would be utilized in some of the cars that the province is using?

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, the electric automobiles that my honourable friend speaks of have been at the University of Manitoba and I believe it was just today that I signed a letter advising the University of Manitoba that they could have those two automobiles to do with whatever they choose. They have been doing some experimenting with them and I believe that they have found them useful for experimental purposes and since there was no one else interested in them we felt that it would be perhaps the best disposition of those automobiles to allow the universities to continue some experiments with them.

With respect to the other question about using alternate forms of energy, although we haven't done anything as yet, it is our intention to carry on an experimental project with the use of propane gas and perhaps that could be expanded when other forms of energy become available in this province. We might extend that experiment to other forms as well. But, my Honourable friend has posed a good question. I think it's one that we should carry on and I can assure him that it will be our intention to take advantage of whatever alternate forms of energy there are in order to make sure that when those forms of energy become available we'll have some knowledge of how they can be used.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID BLAKE (Minnedosa): Mr. Chairman, a question to the Minister: I believe he mentioned that there was something like 2,400 odd cars that were owned by the province in the government fleet. I wonder if he has any figures or any information on how this compares with other provinces and what their experience has been. I understand one other province owns about seven cars and rents or pays the government employees mileage and expenses on their vehicles. I wonder if the Minister has any figures or any information on that?

MR. JORGENSON: No, I can't say that I have any information on the kind of arrangement that is being carried on in other provinces. I'm not sure just whether or not that is the most practical way. I suppose that would depend on circumstances. I would think that there may be certain conditions

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

under which that may be a preferable arrangement but I can't give my honourable friend any definitive information as how that compares with what other provinces are doing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass — The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I can recall hearing previous Ministers of Government Services explain to this committee that it was a general policy of the government to trade in its vehicles about every three years so that approximately one-third of the fleet each year would be traded in. I would like to ask the Minister whether that policy is still in force or whether there has been any change; whether the policy still has to do with time, that is after three years a vehicle is traded in, regardless of its condition, or does it have more to do with the amount of wear and the amount of miles on a vehicle that determines whether or not it is traded in?

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, I suppose that the quick answer to my honourable friend's question would be whichever comes first. As he may be aware, some departments, and I think of the Department of National Resources as an example, will use their vehicles in terrain and road conditions that are less than ideal and under those circumstances the wear on a vehicle would be much more rapid than it would be on an automobile that is travelling on the highways all the time. It is our policy, in as far as it can be followed and there has to be exceptions for the reasons that I have just pointed out, to trade in the vehicles every four years or approximately 80,000 miles. We haven't quite reached that plateau yet, but hopefully within perhaps another year or so we will have reached that stage where there can be a regular trade in of vehicles on that basis.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, the Minister says the criterion is now four years or 80,000 miles. I don't recall that being the figure that was given to the Committee in previous years. I am asking him therefore, has there been a change in policy recently, if so, when did it come in and is my recollection correct that the former policy was for three years and I don't recall whether there was a mileage reason in there as well?

I should tell the Minister that I bought an ex-government car from one of the dealers in the city a few years ago and it had something like 55-60,000 miles on it. I'm still driving it. It was in good condition and it has given me very good service for the last five years.

MR. JORGENSON: My honourable friend has just given me perhaps the best reason I've heard yet why we should go to four instead of three years. If automobiles are going to be providing that kind of service for an additional period of time, then it may be wise to extend that period, but that again will depend on the kind of use that the automobile has had.

My honourable friend said that there was different information given to him in a previous meeting; that may well be true. I think that the policy of the previous administration was a three-year trade-in

period. We carried that forward until recently and that has now been changed. We feel that we can extend that period to four years and still get good use out of those automobiles and that's the policy we're following right now.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for clarifying that there has in fact been a change in policy. I'm sure that the change in policy didn't come out of thin air, at least I hope it didn't. I would assume that there was some form of study or survey done to check the costs of maintaining an older car for the extra time as opposed to the higher trade-in value and the lower maintenance costs of a new one. Perhaps the Minister can give us details of that study; when it carried out; who carried it out and what were the recommendations forthcoming from it.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, I want to apologize to my honourable friend. I've been advised that I have misinformed in when I said that the policy had been changed recently. Apparently that is the policy that has been in effect for a number of years and I cannot answer his suggestion that in a previous meeting of this committee, I believe he said it was last year, that they were advised differently. I am told that the policy is one that has been in existence for several years.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I very carefully didn't say it was last year or even which administration it was, because my memory is not that good, but I do recall a hearing, I believe it was in Room 254, a former Minister of Government Services explaining the policy in this regard to the Committee. I said that I did recall that it was three years and that if one-third of the fleet was traded every year but whether that was a year ago or two years or three years, I really do not recall — that's why I was asking the Minister if there was a change of policy and if so when it came in.

Another question that I had asked him was the reason for the change in the policy, whether there had been a study done to determine if the costs of running a car for an extra year with the extra depreciation and maintenance on it was offset by the higher trade-in value and the lesser costs of maintenance on a new vehicle. Can he give the committee any information on that particular study?

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that particular policy predates the coming into office of this particular administration. Whether or not they had carried on a study to determine whether or not that was a more effective way of purchasing automobiles is something that I'm not able to say. It's a policy that I'm advised was in effect when we came into office and has been just simply carried on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass — The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I think that the question that the Honourable Member for Minnedosa was driving at — I had the impression that he wanted a fleet that was leased or at least he seemed to be suggesting something like that — that was the Task Force recommendation which I think was

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

thrown out by this government as not a practical solution for a host of reasons. But I'm interested in the point that my colleague has been pursuing. It's true that I guess in the last year or so of the previous administration that the mileage and the trade-in was extended in an attempt to save money and there's a fine line somewhere in the life of a car, between a car with 60,000 miles on it and 80,000 miles. At some point you're going to have problems with your vehicle. I was talking to a friend of mine tonight who told me that he bought a second car because his other car was getting old; his other car he says was four years old. I pointed out to him that my car is 14 years old and still functioning. But when you're dealing with a couple of thousand vehicles as opposed to an individual you may be lucky in one car and you may have a lemon in another. But the point is when you're dealing with 2,500 vehicles as the Honourable Minister is, he has to have a policy by which the fleet will be rotated. He says that the policy is 80,000 and I say that is stretching it. That policy was put in when we were there and we were a bit nervous about that. The attempt was to save money on purchases and to do this and to do that and so on, but at some point you start getting the repair bills and you start getting the maintenance costs and that then has to be balanced against the amount of money required to purchase new vehicles. But I want to tell the Minister that if he thinks that he's adhering to this policy, that the information that I have is that he is not, and that there are vehicles in the fleet with as much as 153,000 miles on them. Now if this true and I will give the Minister the detail in a moment, then I say that the policy is not being adhered to and that there are vehicles on the road which are probably unsafe, and they are certainly not useful in the sense that they could have a serious breakdown at any time. I wouldn't want to be driving a government clunker with 147 or 152,000 miles on it because I would be afraid that some day when you're taking a run down the highway up in Roblin that all of a sudden the car would break down.

A MEMBER: Russ, I drove a Mercury 185,000 — it's still running today.

MR. DOERN: 185,000. (Interjection)— Right.

A MEMBER: No problem in Roblin.

MR. DOERN: Right.

A MEMBER: The roads are good.

MR. DOERN: Not everyone's as good a driver or as good a politician as my honourable friend but again you're giving me an example and there's probably somebody else here —(Interjection)— Do they still make Mercurys? —(Interjection)— No — well, I'm saying there's 92 or 93,000 on mine but there must be people in this Chamber who've had cars that have gone 10-20,000 miles and then they just got rid of them because they were just becoming a burden and they didn't operate properly.

Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister if his policy is trade at 80,000, — I want to know how come he has cars with roughly twice that mileage and I'm going to cite as a source a bulletin of February 12th this year from the MGEA. They have a

news bulletin and they contend in this bulletin that there are vehicles used by the province for firefighting and enforcement, which seem to be serious occupations, and as of November, 1980, that five vehicles in the eastern region have mileage ranges of 87,000 to 153,644 and —(Interjection)— Please, no commercials, no name brands, just use the generic term, the big M will do.

Mr. Chairman, these vehicles have almost double, some of them, the so-called legal limit, the standard, and the MGEA says it has further examples in many departments where vehicles are unsafe for the job requirements — that's a quote — "unsafe for the job requirements" — and that the repair costs due to condition of the vehicles is becoming wasteful.

I want to know if the Minister is aware of this; whether he has had this drawn to his attention by the MGEA or by the department in question, and I want to ask him what he's going to do about it, because it would strike me that this is in violation of the guidelines and also somewhat hazardous in terms of providing proper equipment to our personnel.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, as I pointed to my honourable friend earlier, we are attempting to move into the direction of change-over of cars every four years, or 80,000 miles. Now I think I also advised him that we had not quite reached that state yet and I'm not surprised to hear that there may be some automobiles that go beyond that at the present time. This is the direction that we're attempting to go and hope to reach within a short period of time.

At the present time, the number of automobiles that are under 80,000 miles, is 1,800, and the total number that are over 80,000 is 634 — represents about 30 percent of the fleet. Mr. Chairman, as I said, it is our intention to move in the direction of changeover at 80,000 miles and we feel that is a reasonable and a good changeover period.

With respect to the comments that my honourable friend was quoting from the MGEA, let me point out to him and I'm sure that he knows, that the Department of Government Services assigns the vehicles to the departments, or at the request of the departments, the vehicles are traded in and new ones provided. Where they go when they reach that department is entirely up to that particular department. As I have pointed out earlier, the arrangement is on a complete cost recovery basis and the departments now have the responsibility for financing those and getting the appropriations to finance those vehicles. I can only give him the information with respect to the Department of Government Services and we do have a number of vehicles in this department.

As an example, I have a list of new cars that had been assigned last year and this year and my honourable friend should not be too surprised to find out that they do not go to the top level of the Civil Service. They go to the people whose cars are being replaced. I think in every instance, with the exception of two — where the person, whose car had been recalled and a new one assigned, had resigned. Every one of those cars went to that same person and they are not the top level of the Civil Service — construction supervisors; property appraisers; design service architect; property appraiser; technical officers; administrative officer; property appraiser;

another property appraiser; construction superintendent; property appraiser; construction superintendent, (twice); 2 to EMO officers; property appraiser; technical engineers and construction superintendent.

Now, one, by looking at that list, will show that the automobiles are being assigned on the basis of the need that is occurring in this particular department. If my honourable friend has any particular department that he has in mind, then perhaps he could direct his questions to that department, because they are the ones that are responsible for the assigning.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I don't accept what the Minister says. I mean, the Minister is trying to get off the hook and say that it is up to each department; that he is only the Minister of Government Services in charge of the fleet in terms of the policy; when it comes to purchasing, you have to go to each individual department and point the finger at them. I say that that only works providing they have the necessary funds that reflect the policy. I mean, obviously . . . Are you telling me that I can go to any department in government and look at their fleet and if their fleet, if the vehicles let's say, projected in that particular fiscal year are bordering on 80,000, let's say they have a hundred vehicles that are going to have to be replaced in the coming fiscal year, that there are funds allocated to them on that basis. I mean, if you don't give them the funds, then you may as well forget the policy. I'm saying if you have the policy, is the policy reflected in the individual Estimates of the various departments so that they can react to the policy? Otherwise it's useless. You can't go to the manager and say, you have a hundred cars that are 100,000 miles, why aren't these replaced, unless you give him the budgeting so that he can respond. I'd like to know what happens in this Cabinet. The Minister says he's not buying the cars, the departments are buying the cars. Are the departments being given the funds to make purchases at the 80,000 level?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, the money for replacement of vehicles is budgeted in this department and then assigned to the department as my honourable friend knows. There is consultation between the user department and the Motor Vehicle Branch to determine which cars will be replaced. If that particular department requires additional vehicles, that is, in excess of those that are classed as replacement, then they must find that budgeting from within their own departments and do. They make arrangements to ensure that their budgets are such as to accommodate that purchase of those additional vehicles.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister about this particular point. He says that 30 percent of the fleet, some 634 vehicles are over the 80,000-mark and I suppose that ranges all the way up to 150,000 miles or more for those two or three Mercurys that we have in the fleet. So I want to ask the Minister, what is he talking about when he says they're trying to move to 80,000, because four or five

years ago the policy was to trade at 60,000 and that was eventually raised to 80,000 and now the Minister talks as if he's trying to meet 80,000 as a goal. The ceiling was lifted but it seems that the actual de facto ceiling might be a lot higher. It sounds as if the Minister is trying to get these cars down to 80,000. They were formerly allowed to rise to 80,000; he's trying to lower it to 80,000. So I ask him what he's going to do about it? Are we going to come back here in the future and debate this question just before the 1982 election in the spring and the Minister is going to say to us that he still has 600 or 700 vehicles outstanding and that he hasn't made any progress? Is he attempting to trade in these vehicles? Does he have any sort of a program or is it just that he is going to trade in some and leave 600 or 700 over the criteria, because if that's the case, maybe he should make adjustments on the criteria? He says it's 80,000; maybe it's 80,000 for some and 100,000 or 120,000 for the rest.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend is suggesting that there are a large number of vehicles that have over 100,000 miles. I might point out to him that in December of 1980 the total number of vehicles that were over 100,000 miles was 224. At the present time because of the policy that we have been following, because as I said, we have attempted to trade in those vehicles on a more regular basis to ensure that the vehicles are more serviceable. Right now there are only 34 vehicles that are over 100,000 miles and that hopefully can be reduced further before the end of this year, as I attempted to point out to my honourable friend. We recognized the problem of vehicles that were being over-used and in a somewhat systematic way we have attempted to ensure that the replacement of those vehicles took place on a more regular basis. I think the figures will indicate that is exactly what is happening. We have reduced the number of vehicles which have 100,000 miles on them from 224 to 34. That would seem to me that there is something taking place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might just explore a little further, this matter of the trade-in of vehicles at a certain stage. I notice one of the Minister's colleagues has joined the committee and he probably knows more about cars than two of us put together. Mr. Chairman, the Minister has said that at least four years ago the criterion for trade-in went from 60,000 to 80,000 miles. Now I have to presume that in making that policy change, the government or the Minister is acting on pretty good information, that somebody must have sat down and figured out the costs of continuing to own an older car with its attendant increase in maintenance and repair costs as against trading in that vehicle and getting a higher trade-in cost and lower maintenance charges for the first few months, the first few years of that vehicle's life. Now what the Minister is saying to us is that he has adopted that policy decision of 80,000 miles as being the criterion, the criterion whereby it will be a waste of public money to run that car beyond 80,000 miles. Yet he has told us that as of only a couple of months ago he had 224

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

vehicles that were in that position of being more expensive to maintain as an old car than to maintain as a new car to replace it.

I find it a little difficult to understand as my colleague for Elmwood did as to how we had reached that position. The Minister is saying that we're trying to get down to the 80,000, yet by the admission of the former Minister, some four or perhaps five years ago the figure was at three years or 60,000. It would seem that when there was a relaxation of that, that the average or the maximum mileage on any car would gradually move up towards 80,000. The Minister gave us a figure a few minutes ago of some 600 out of 2,400 vehicles or one-quarter which were over the 80,000-mark that he had and he was telling us he was trying to get down to that figure.

So then we must ask what has happened over the last little while, whether it's a year, two years or three years, that allowed so many vehicles to go from the maximum 60,000 miles to well in excess of 80,000 up to a figure we've been given here this evening, 150-some-odd-thousand miles. So it raises the question of what happened to get so many cars above that maximum or that optimum of tax-saving expenditure of 80,000 and to put fully one-quarter of the fleet or some 600 vehicles into that category where they are costing more to maintain in that old condition than would be a new car to replace it. The only thing that comes to my mind, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that shortly after taking office this government instituted a Task Force on government efficiency or something like that. Once it surfaced it sank out of sight almost completely and I think we've all forgotten what the original title of it was. We can just recall who the Minister in charge of that particular task force was although he is, I wouldn't say sunk below the ways, he's no longer with us.

We recall, Mr. Chairman, that one of the recommendations in that particular report was to reduce the government fleet to, as I recall, pay civil servants for the use of their cars rather than the government owning a fleet for the use of its employees. We might guess that along with that policy in the early years of the government with its restraint program that was one of the reasons, and if it's true, that there was a decrease in the number of cars that were traded in. This is the only thing that I can think of that would cause the average mileage on those cars to go up from 60,000 to well over 100, up to 150,000 is a number that we've been given, in which case, Mr. Chairman, we are getting what is almost an admission from the Minister that the 80,000-mile figure being the crossover point from saving money to wasting money, was in fact incurred as a governmental policy decision, back two or three years, that the Minister is now saying to us was wrong and that it was in fact a waste of taxpayers money which is what the Opposition was saying at the time as I recall. Now if that were not the case if there is now not a figure of 80,000 miles for a vehicle perhaps it is something else, well, I have already asked the Minister on that particular topic. Does he have a study to show that it shouldn't be pegged at that amount, it should be some other level? If he has such figures to show us that there would be a saving of taxpayers' money then we would be very interested to hear that from the Minister, especially

as we recall this afternoon the statements that he made to the House in a different regard that really it was the taxpayers' money that was important and that's what we were dealing with and it would be and is this Minister's policy to see that those tax dollars are used to the best advantage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass; (2) — pass.
The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I just have another question or two here. I wonder how the Minister would react to the statement by the MGEA that — and I'll quote from it so he can respond, and again I read from the bulletin of February 12. "Senior managers in some government offices have new government vehicles assigned as a matter of perk while other government employees out in the field are assigned wrecks," spelled w-r-e-c-k-s, "and based on information MGEA has gathered, the President has requested the Minister responsible for the Civil Service to conduct an immediate review of government policy and the MGEA's position has been that the criteria for vehicle replacement should be vehicle safety and job requirements, not perks, and it says employee sources tell us that the policy is opposite." So that is pretty stong stuff — perks for the bosses and wrecks for the employees. I wonder whether the Minister would comment on that and secondly, whether he did in fact receive a communique from the President of the MGEA asking for an immediate review of this policy?

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, I have received no communications from the Chairman of the Manitoba Government Employees Association. I have endeavoured to answer my honourable friend's question by pointing out what has happened in the Department of Government Services. As I said before, when the cars are assigned to the other departments one assumes that they know where the cars are required and are apportioned out on the basis of where they are most needed.

MR. DOERN: I asked the Minister whether he thinks it's satisfactory that for example in one department, MHRC, six new cars were recently purchased for the Manager, the Comptroller, the Legal Counsel, the Property Manager, the Research Officer and the Corporate Secretary. At the same time the fire fighting and enforcement vehicles in the eastern region are driving cars that are in the 87,000 to 153,000 vehicle mileage range. These cars are alleged to be unsafe and/or unsuitable for the job requirements. I wonder whether the Minister finds that the policy is working in implementation because that surely does not correspond to what the Minister is suggesting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass; (2) — pass — the Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, did we get a breakdown of the Other Expenditures which is (2). I noticed it's gone from 4.5 to a little over 7. The Minister did tell us that there was a change in accounting or cost breakdown but I wonder if he could give us a little more detail of \$7 million.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, those Other Expenditures consists of gas, lubricants, anti-freeze

and non-budgeted price increases in 1980-81, insurance costs, repair costs, etc., etc.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, the Minister's mention of insurance recalls to mind something that happened I believe it was about a year ago when there were suggestions made that some government cars for civil servants resident in Winnipeg were in fact registered in Brandon or registered as a Brandon address or other out of town locations, which located in a lower Autopac premium being paid. I wonder if the Minister can report on this, whether the situation has now been rectified.

MR. JORGENSEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can give my honourable friend that breakdown. In 1979 and I am assuming that my honourable friend knows the territories; Territory 1 is the City of Winnipeg, Territory 2 is Brandon or the rural areas, Territory 3 is the Interlake and northwest areas, and Territory 4 is the north. In 1979 in Territory 1 there were 218 vehicles registered in this particular territory as compared to 2,000 in '76 in Territory 2, 41 in Territory 3, and 90 in Territory 4. We changed that so that the vehicles are registered in the area in which they are used and that has changed the picture somewhat that in 1981, as compared to 218 vehicles, there are now 973 vehicles registered in the City of Winnipeg, which more accurately reflects the number of vehicles that are used in this area. In Territory 2 there are 1,250, as compared to 2,076 that were registered in 1979; and Territory 3, 104 are registered there now, as compared to 41 in 1979; and in Territory 4, 152 vehicles are registered compared to 90 in 1979.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2) — pass; (3) — pass; (b) — pass.

The Honourable Member for Elmwood on (b) or are we on (c)?

MR. DOERN: I wanted to ask a couple of questions on the new provincial garage and the old, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be on (3) then.

MR. DOERN: I wanted to ask the Minister if he can make some comments on the new garage and the old one which is only a block or so from here. We all witnessed in the past few years the political football that the government made out of the new provincial garage. It's now finally been accessed by the government after wasting a lot of money by keeping it empty and by having to then supply security heat and light and now it is fully utilized. I ask the Minister, in terms of the old garage, if he could indicate what use it is now being put to. I guess originally the idea was that it would be a kind of minimal gas-up operation and that possibly the old facility would be used for storage. Could the Minister report on that?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, the old garage will be used as an interim parking space when construction begins on the new law courts building because there will be some parking space that will be disappearing as a result of the construction of that building so we're going to keep it there for the

time being and there are two staff people there now providing gas service for the government fleet.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like the Minister to tell us . . . I take it we're on (b) (3), Mr. Chairman, are we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WALDING: . . . what the \$3 million is to be spent for. I notice it's an increase of 50 percent on last year. I'm sure that that's not accounted for simply by inflation.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, the reason for the increase is simply that we're buying more vehicles.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, that raises the next question, whether the Minister is increasing the number of vehicles or whether he's increasing the number of vehicles traded in.

MR. JORGENSEN: No, it's increasing the number of vehicles that are being traded in in an effort to reach that level that my honourable friend was speaking of earlier.

MR. WALDING: Will the Minister tell the Committee how many vehicles he anticipates being traded in in this fiscal year and for the \$3 million.

MR. JORGENSEN: I'm advised that it will be about 430.

MR. WALDING: Just for clarification will the Minister tell us whether this will increase the total number of government vehicles or will it remain exactly the same?

MR. JORGENSEN: That figure that my Honourable friend sees on this particular item is all trade-ins.

MR. WALDING: As the Minister would expect that in estimates next year when we ask for the number of vehicles that we will be told 2,479 which is the figure the Minister gave this evening; would that be correct?

MR. JORGENSEN: My honourable friend would be far better at prognostication than anybody in the Motor Vehicle Branch or in the government if he can accurately predict that the exact number of vehicles at the end of the next fiscal year will be exactly the same as it now.

MR. WALDING: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Minister has explained that the \$3 million is to be only for trade-in purposes. We realize from his remarks that we could have less vehicles at the end of the one year, could we have more if the Minister doesn't have any other source of funds than this \$3 million.

MR. JORGENSEN: What my honourable friend is asking for is what that \$3 million is for; I have replied to him that that is for replacement vehicles.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister would agree that had the restraint program not been in place, as of last year and the year

before, the Minister could have traded in the necessary number of vehicles, kept to his 80,000 mile criterion at a cost of much less than the additional \$1 million than he is asking for this year.

MR. JORGENSON: You're going to have to ask someone who was in this department before I was because I came in here sometime in the early part of this year. I am not in a position to be able to answer that question.

MR. WALDING: Well, Mr. Chairman, I do have to say the Minister, with his long parliamentary experience, has really not used that excuse, if I can call it that, very much during his estimates but he knows that, as the Minister responsible for the department, he is the person who responds to the House for all that has happened in that department, even in the past. He knows that we cannot contact his colleague who was the previous Minister and ask him. The Minister knows full well that when it comes to the department he is the Minister who responds for that department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (3) — pass; (b) — pass;
(c) Office Equipment Branch, (1) Salaries — pass;
(2) — pass; (c) — pass;
(d) Purchasing Bureau, (1) Salaries — pass; (2) — pass; (d) — pass;
(e) Materials Branch, (1) — pass; (2) — pass; (3) — pass; (e) — pass.
The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. MCKENZIE: Under the Materials Branch, I wonder if the Minister could advise me if any of these dollars are expended for the Doern Solar System that's been up on the roof for many years; if that project is still up there functioning and if, in fact, the feds now are interested in it or if it's providing some kind of heat for this building or maybe it has just been scrapped and there is no monies here for materials to prop it up again?

MR. JORGENSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I should advise my honourable friend that that particular subject comes under an item that has been passed, under Field Services, Item (j). However, since the question is posed I can tell him that we are at the present time looking at that particular project to see if there is some way that it cannot be utilized for some service within this building. I cannot tell him more than that, other than we feel it should be utilized in some way and we are intending to find out just how it can best be utilized.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (3) — pass; (e) — pass. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: I wanted to ask a question there too, you know, and I find it peculiar on the part of members opposite that they talk out of both sides of their mouth. It wasn't more than a few minutes ago that the Member for Roblin was standing up in his place and encouraging the Minister to experiment with new forms of energy and new kinds of motor vehicles, other than gas. But of course, he didn't want to include electricity and I suppose he also wouldn't want to include solar energy. I just want to say on this particular project that this was an

experiment; it was largely funded by the Federal Government and supported by the Provincial Government and it involved the university and so on. If the government wants to let it rust and rot that's up to them but that was a functioning experiment and it was, I think, a useful experiment and I know that people came from, certainly all over North America if not from other Countries to look at that as an imaginative thrust in the field of energy conservation. The members opposite can laugh all they want about electric cars and they can laugh all they want about solar energy but they shouldn't then say that the government should experiment in new forms of energy because that is what the previous government attempted. I suppose it'll take time; I suppose we might have to wait another 10 or 20 years until we see a lot of electric cars but we'll see them. You know, when the price of gas keeps going up, encouraged by the Federal Government and the Alberta Government and the Manitoba Government throwing a few cents in there. As the prices go up, Mr. Chairman, other forms of energy will be looked at.

So, I say I don't see why the member, on one hand, would say let's try different things and then when experiments were tried he says those were terrible experiments and wasteful. I say he says that by implication. So, he can't have it both ways. If he wants experimentation he has to assume the risks; he has to assume the cost; he has to assume the possibility of success or failure but then he shouldn't go around, on the other hand, saying that he wants tests as long as there are no tests being made and when tests are being made, then he says those were terrible. You know, you cannot guarantee success and so I say to the honourable members that they are doing exactly the same thing as they did earlier this afternoon on seat belts. These members get up and they spend their time running down seat belts and then they jump up saying, but we are in favor of them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Seat belts is not under discussion. The Honourable Member for Elmwood. The Honourable Minister.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, might I just say that I agree that the experiment that was conducted was just that, an experiment, and in that sense it was very useful. Now, what I was attempting to say, that we want now to try and find some practical application to that experiment and it is in that respect that we are now looking at the project in order to try and put it to some practical use.

MR. MCKENZIE: Just for the record, I found it very strange the time the Honourable Member for Elmwood set that experiment up on the roof because I well understood and knew at the time that who is now Minister of Mines, his thesis was to build one solar system, it's at the university functioning there today, I guess, it likely is, long before this experiment was set up on this roof. I wondered why the Honourable Member for Elmwood would, as a Minister of course, he had the authority to set, but he could have just as well went and utilized the one that was at the university which was created and was the thesis of the now Minister of Finance, the Member for Riel, many years before this one came up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (3) — pass; (e) — pass.

(f) Telephones, (1) Salaries — pass; (2) — pass; (f) — pass.

(g) Post Office, (1) Salaries — pass; (2) — pass; (3) — pass; (g) — pass.

(h) Manitoba Gazette, (1) Salaries — pass; (2) — pass; (h) — pass.

(j) Queen's Printer Management and Brokerage, (1) Salaries — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to briefly discuss with the Minister, something we've talked about before, he and I, and that is the fact that I assume that under (j) or (k), we are talking about the production of Hansard and I assume that that particular problem will be solved. We discussed that, I think, yesterday and it certainly has run into some problems and the Minister has given his assurance that we are going to break it. Now I don't know about today. I assume that yesterday's Hansard isn't ready today, am I correct in that regard, that we're running on a 48-hour basis, or are we running on a 24-hour basis? Can the Minister give us his guideline? Is yesterday's Hansard to be available today, or is it to be two days late?

MR. JORGENSEN: The intention is to attempt to operate on a 24-hour basis, if that can be achieved and we think it can, all things being equal and all systems in place, but as my honourable friend knows sometimes things happen that prevent the achievement of those objectives. The fact that we were unable to staff all the stations as adequately as we would have liked to has produced some problems which we feel are corrected now and we hope that we can get back to a 24-hour basis.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I also wanted to raise the question of the P.A. system and I assume that this is as good a place as any, because it has to do with the reproduction of sound and of the recording of sound and so on and I want to say to him again

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the honourable member, I think that under discussion of the P.A. system, it was advised or requested that it be discussed under Item 6, Resolution 73, Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets. The Honourable Minister.

MR. JORGENSEN: If I may, I have no objections to my honourable friend raising it at this particular stage, providing it is on the clear understanding that this is the place he will raise it and not a second time under the next item. He can raise it on one or the other and if he prefers to raise it here, that's all right with me, we can even handle it that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the honourable members, I think that in all fairness, there could be other members who want to speak on that particular subject and I think it would be proper that it be discussed under Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets and with that guidance, I would ask (j)(1) Salaries — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I gather there is now a new Queen's Printer, Mr. Bruce Hudson, based on

somewhere in the last few weeks or months. Is that correct?

MR. JORGENSEN: Yes.

MR. DOERN: Apparently in the last couple of years there have been some serious problems in the Queen's Printer area. There were at least one or two predecessors in the last few years and there seems to have been some mix-ups in the backfield. Mr. Chairman, I want to know if we can have the assurance that Mr. Hudson, who is a competent civil servant, can handle this job.

One of the complaints of observers is that the old requirement that the Queen's Printer be a printer, a qualified printer at least originally, was set aside. It seems that no sooner did we get a new Queen's Printer — and I just can't for the moment think of the name of the old Queen's Printer — it was Ray somebody, Ray Evans, who was here for several decades, I think. He was an institution. It seems that after he left and so on, that somewhere in between the requirement was set aside by this government a couple of years ago, two or three years ago, new people were hired and then there were problems. Now I don't know whether those problems can be directly attributed to the fact that the person lacked in-plant experience or not, but I know that some observers have said that that requirement shouldn't have been deleted. So I wonder if the Minister has any comments about the last couple of years in terms of apparent malfunctions on the part of the top person and below; and secondly, what qualifications Mr Hudson has, whether he does in fact have any print shop experience, etc.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, this particular problem, I might say, has followed me around a little bit because for a time the Queen's Printer was in the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and admittedly there were some problems. When the person who had the position resigned it, we did bulletin for a new Queen's Printer and we removed the qualification that he must be a printer and I don't think that that was a mistake.

I believe that the person who is best suited for that job is a person who has administrative abilities and the job specifications at the time that the position was bulletined, I think largely specified that kind of a qualification. Mr. Hudson, along with several others throughout the competition, was examined and subsequently was appointed as being the one who had the best qualifications for the job and I agree with my honourable friend. I believe that Mr. Hudson is one that will carry on those responsibilities in a manner that will bring credit to the office of the Queen's Printer and to the entire establishment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass; (2) — pass; (j) — pass — the Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. J. WALLY MCKENZIE: Just a brief question and it relates to the Supreme Court judgment and then of course, the court decision that we see in the papers today about the two languages and I'm wondering, is the Queen's Printer facing that problem, that we're likely in the near future, to be required to print Hansard or the Orders of the Day in both languages?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, that is a question that I would prefer not to answer. That's something that I believe is before the courts at the present time and whether or not that will come to pass will depend on events as they unfold.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (j) — pass; (k) Queen's Printer Operating (1) Salaries — pass; (2) — pass; (k) — pass; (l) — pass — the Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I note that some \$15.3 million out of \$23 million are recoverable from other departments and agencies. I wonder if the Minister could give us a breakdown by these alphabetic sections as to how much is recoverable in each instance.

MR. JORGENSON: Yes. In (b), the amount that is recoverable is \$8.5 million and (c) is \$1.2 million — and these are rounded figures — in Materials (e) \$2.2 million, in (f) \$45,000, and in (k) it's \$3.2 million.

MR. WALDING: The last figure that the Minister gave is rounded to \$3.2 million. Is the entire amount recoverable?

MR. JORGENSON: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (l) — pass. Resolution 71 — pass. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,287,500 for Government Services, Supply and Services \$8,287,500 — pass.

Resolution No. 72, Clause 4. Project Services (a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of questions I wanted to deal with here concerning architects and engineers, but I assume that this would also be a good area to discuss the government's policy on art. I assume that, in general, in this section is the moneys, or at least the policy or the moneys and/or, towards the purchase and display of art and I wanted to ask the Minister about the government's policy in regard to new construction and in regard to the use of photographs and paintings and prints, etc., in offices which are often included in the general design and the interior design portions of the department. My first question is, has the government maintained its policy of 1 percent to be set aside for the purchase of art? Secondly, does the Minister have any figures? Because the problem here is that although the 1 percent policy is an excellent one, if you're not doing anything it doesn't mean anything — one percent of zero is zero — so could the Minister make some comment there?

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, the 1 percent policy that my honourable friend speaks of is incorporated in the design of all the new buildings that are going up, but I want to tell him that we are attempting to work on a different arrangement, and although nothing is firm as yet the old policy still remains in existence. We do want to make some

adjustments to that policy which I think will improve it.

There are certain buildings, as my honourable friend probably is aware, that have a higher profile than others and it would seem proper that in those buildings, perhaps a higher percentage could be allocated for those particular buildings. For example, I would think that significant government buildings with a fairly high level of public use could be funded more properly at an amount that would be equivalent to about 1.5 percent of the estimated construction costs; and government buildings for general use, with a requirement for reasonably frequent public access, be funded at an amount equivalent to the 1 percent that is currently in use; and other government buildings with limited public access be funded at perhaps, .5 to 1 percent of the estimated construction costs; and that government buildings for service functions with a requirement for limited public access, be funded at an amount equivalent to .25 of 1 percent of the estimated construction costs, with the funds to be used for reproductions only; and then of course, that government buildings for service functions, with no public access, should have no funds provided at all for art. I would think that would be a policy that would more accurately reflect the need for that sort of thing in government buildings. As I said, although there has been no firm decisions made in that respect this is the direction that we are hoping to go and I would be happy to have my honourable friend's comments on that change in policy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I think the main point, refinements or so on, can of course be made to any policy. I think the main point is to have a policy and to have a policy that encourages and provides a market for local Manitoba artists and there are some extremely good ones; in other instances perhaps for a few Canadian artists as well. I think there should be some mix but I think it should be predominately for the local artist to compete and to have their works purchased and their works displayed. I suppose another variation on the theme might be to simply maintain the 1 percent policy and then purchase on that basis but then some of the works of art could in fact be moved. I think that's exactly what the present administration did in the case of the Provincial Garage — they took a work that was originally financially dedicated, etc., to the garage and moved it to the Norquay Building. So I don't really care what the policy is, that policy certainly is not inconsistent with the previous policy, it's just a modification of it. As long as the Minister and the government do in fact recognize that there should be some quality in the environment that people work in and that the public is exposed to because I don't know if I can make the case for the Greeks here, that is the responsibility of my deskmate who talks about Docceades and the Greeks and all that sort of stuff, but they believe that the environment influenced a person and that if a person was in a healthy environment or a beautiful environment it had an effect on them. Now I can't say that in the case of all the examples of modern art or contemporary art. But I still think that paintings and

sculpture, contemporary, are better than bare walls and calendars.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister a few questions on an interesting perhaps lighter topic and that is the recent announcement that two Manitoba artists had been commissioned to paint the Speakers.

A MEMBER: What colour?

MR. DOERN: My colleague says what colour. I hope more than one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, could I ask for clarification — the speakers and . . . is that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker?

MR. DOERN: No, Mr. Chairman. I regret to inform you that due to a discriminatory policy on the part of your government they do not at this moment intend to do more than take a polaroid shot of you. I'm waiting for your response but I may have to wait till tomorrow night to hear your response to the members assembled.

Mr. Chairman, I was interested at this announcement. It's mentioned that two Manitoba artists out of 21 applied to paint the Speakers — one being Mary Louise Craze (sic), who is a well-known and very fine portrait painter and Louella Levitt — I must say I'm not acquainted with her work. She sounds like an up-and-coming artist, but we'll be interested to see the work, because I think one of the easiest things to have fun with and make comments on is art. It seems that everyone feels that they are entitled to express their views on the subject and that could be true, but you get a vast variety of comments and reactions to paintings.

Now last November we had a press release on the search for artists to paint the two Speakers and it listed, in fact, it listed three Speakers, and this is what I wanted to ask the Minister about. What happened here? In November you were looking for artists to paint three Speakers and it carefully listed them. This couldn't have been a mistake; this must have been a reversal. It said that the government was looking for someone to paint the portrait of the Honourable Harry Graham, who has been Speaker since November 1977, the Honourable Peter Fox, Speaker from 1971 to 1977 and my illustrious colleague, the Honourable Ben Hanuschak, who was the Speaker from 1969 to 1970 and lo and behold we were somewhat taken aback at comments made I think in the Winnipeg Sun or maybe the Winnipeg Free Press that the Minister, if I recall correctly, I might be wrong, but if I recall correctly the then-Minister Enns said that he thought the painting of the Honourable Ben Hanuschak which we had commissioned, which we had accepted and which he had accepted as being suitable was I think too handsome or made him look too good or didn't accurately represent his smiling face. To that, Mr. Chairman, I simply say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and I simply ask the Minister what happened? The government obviously was determined to repaint Big Ben and then within a few months they decided not to. Can the Minister explain this apparent policy reversal which I might say is not second to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow but somewhere in that league.

MR. JORGENSEN: The retreat as my honourable friend has described it was not on the part of the government. Initially my understanding was that the former Speaker, Mr. Hanuschak, was unhappy with the portrait that had been painted and wanted a second one done and it was on that basis that the competition was held in the first instance. My understanding is then subsequently he changed his mind so that left the painting down to two. Now that's the information I have received. If my honourable friend has information to the contrary perhaps he will enlighten us.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, just to clarify, there was an early attempt made by a Manitoba artist on a trial basis carefully explained that a particular artist would be given an opportunity to paint the Speaker on a sort of on speculation for a very very nominal sum, and that painting was rejected. For a couple of hundred dollars the artist was paid and then another artist was commissioned and that painting was then completed and that painting was accepted by the Speaker and by the government. But for some strange reason the previous Minister decided that he wanted that one changed so we were on the verge of getting a third portrait and I'm just asking how come it was announced that the portrait of the Honourable Ben Hanuschak would be redone when he himself was satisfied and when the previous administration was satisfied, so it was obviously dropped. The man in question didn't ask for his portrait to be redone. Somebody in government decided that it should be redone and then somebody vetoed that suggestion.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, J. Wally McKenzie (Roblin): (a)(1).

The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, that is not the information I received and if my honourable friend wants to challenge that that's up to him, but the information I received is that the original intention was to do that painting over again and then Mr. Hanuschak decided that he was quite satisfied with that particular painting so it was dropped.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I'm also worried about the Premier's painting. It's traditional to paint people when they're in office. I'm talking in particular about Premiers. It's desirable to do Speakers when they're in office but it's even more desirable to do Premiers because of the stress of the job and the prospect of defeat in this particular instance. I would like to get the Premier captured on canvas as soon as possible because once the writs are issued he may look different after that point in time. He may look, for example, unhappy or dejected because he's rejected and I'm hoping that the Minister will have him done as soon as possible so that the paint will at least be allowed to dry while the Premier is still in office.

MR. JORGENSEN: If that's a criteria of how my honourable friend bases his judgment as to when his portrait should be painted then I suggest to him that he has a lot of time yet.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (a)(1) — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Then I have to warn the Minister that he may leave that decision up to the New

Democratic Party and that he would probably get a better painter if he himself selected the painter than if he got us to do the commission.

MR. JORGENSEN: Surely my honourable friend is not suggesting that they in the past have interfered with the painters and instructed them how to paint a portrait.

MR. DOERN: Certainly not, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to make a practical suggestion to the Minister concerning Room 255 and concerning the Speakers' portraits in the hallway. I wanted to say to the Minister that over the past years paintings were all over the place. Some were in storage, some were actually displayed in general and the tradition I guess was that the Premiers' portraits in Room 254 were placed there and that some of the Speakers' portraits were placed in the hallway. Now the problem with the hallway is that it tends to be dark and I know when that I was Minister of the department we toyed with putting lighting over each portrait, because normally when you walk down that hall with the blinding sunlight at times of the year and normal lighting, it is quite unsatisfactory to actually see the portraits of the Speakers. There's also of course a security risk by leaving paintings exposed in hallways that are easily accessible to the public. We have had instances in those hallways of paintings being slashed and being torn with a ballpoint pen or a knife or a finger or being defaced in some way. We also had an instance not too long ago, a couple of years ago, where some maniac came into the building and ran into Room 200 and knocked down a couple of huge paintings and kicked them in and did several thousand dollars damage.

So I want to make a specific proposal to the Minister to consider. Room 255 is new, it has just been developed at some expense by the government as a proper meeting room and it has beautiful pillars and architecture but it has bare walls. Obviously something should go in there. Now in Room 254 you have the Premiers' portraits and as a matter of fact they're getting rapidly filled up. There's really only one or two more spaces available before there's going to be some kind of an overflow as well. So my suggestion to the Minister is that he seriously consider taking the Speakers' portraits from the hallway and relocating them in Room 254. I think it would probably enhance the quality of the room and it would also provide some better security as well.

MR. JORGENSEN: The honourable member has had two suggestions; one of them is that Room 255 be utilized for the hanging of portraits and I can tell my honourable friend we've already thought of that and our decision would be to be placing some of those portraits there.

The second one, with respect to the Premiers' in Room 254, he pointed out that the walls are getting a bit crowded and there isn't room for that many more, and I suspect that what he's suggesting is that we don't change Premiers too often so to lengthen the time that we can keep space available in that room, and I can advise him that's precisely what we intended to do come next election.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (a)(1) — pass — the Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, just to follow up the Minister's last remark. One other solution might be to bring back former Premiers and put them back into office.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: 4.(a) — pass; 4.(a)(2) — pass. (a)(2), are you on (a)(2) or you want to go to (b)?

MR. DOERN: Or 72 (a)(1) or (2)?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (2) Other Expenditures, \$5,300.00.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could provide us with some breakdown of the firms. I don't know if he will have this information available, but if he doesn't I would like it tomorrow afternoon and I also ask him for the second time whether he will make sure that I have a copy of his opening statement so that I can look at some of those projects that he mentioned in terms of construction so that we can discuss that when we get to Resolution 73. I'd like to have that in my hand rather than asking him to repeat it, and repeat it and repeat it.

My main question here is: I would like to know which firms have been assigned new contracts recently, if any; and if he can also give us a general breakdown of the projects that are being designed by architects and which firms in particular those are?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just for the record, may I ask the honourable member, are we in Design Services or are we still on (a)(2) Other Expenditures under Executive Administration? I thought . . .

MR. JORGENSEN: We're in Design Services.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, (b)(1) Design Services — the Honourable Minister.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, in response to my honourable friend's first question about the list of projects; what I plan to do is to provide my honourable friend with a complete list. The ones I outlined in my opening remarks were simply a few of the major ones. I would prefer to provide him with a total list and I will have that prepared for him when we get to the item under which it can be considered.

With respect to the other question, I can give him a list of some of the firms that have been engaged in consulting capacities, Acres Consulting Services Limited, they are engineers; Calnitsky Heschka Associates, they are interior designers; J.H. Currie is a mechanical engineer; Damas and Smith Limited, engineers; M.M. Dillon Ltd., engineers; Rudy P. Friesen, architect; GBR Associates; Hardy Associates; M. Hawryluk, consulting services; Icoy Partnerships; MMP, Winnipeg; Macdonald Cockburn McFeeters; Mark Negata; Fred Snider Tomczak; Pro Plan Construction Services Limited; Reid Crowther and Partners Ltd.; Scouten Mitchell Sigurdson; Smith Carter Partners; Underwood McLellan Ltd. and Williams and Associates. That's for the list of some of the firms that have been engaged in this construction year.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (b)(1) — pass — the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Tuesday, 24 February, 1981

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, again I wonder whether I could obtain from the Minister a copy of — maybe that will be contained in that information, but if there is a list, first of all of the projects that are now under way in terms of design and/or construction, that's the first point; but secondly, I'd also like to know the architectural firms involved in those projects; and third, if possible, the dollar values of those projects and possibly the architectural and engineering fees allocated to those objects. If we could have that for tomorrow afternoon, I'm prepared to let most of this resolution go and then perhaps we could call it a day.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, I should advise my honourable friend that the consultants that will be engaged on projects that are upcoming have not yet been assigned, so it would be difficult to provide him with that information but I will endeavour to provide him with the other information he asks for insofar as it is possible to do so.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (b)(1) — pass; (b)(2) — pass; (b) — pass; Project Management, (c)(1) Salaries — pass; (c)(2) — pass; Land Acquisition Branch, (d)(1) Salaries — pass; (d)(2) — pass; (3) — pass; (d) — pass; Land Value Appraisal Commission, there is no dollars there. Oh, there is Salaries.. Resolution 72: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,931,400 for Government Services — pass.

MR. JORGENSEN: I move that committee rise, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Committee rise.